

1
The Plea of the Poore,

O R

A TREATISE
OF BENEFICENCE
AND ALMES-DEEDS:

teaching how these Christian duties
are rightly to be performed,
and perswading to the frequent
doing of them.

NECESSARY FOR
these times, wherein the *workes of*
mercy are so much neglected, or so
undiscreetly practized.

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H E B R. 13. 16.

To doe good and communicate forget not : for with such sacrifices
G O D *is well pleased.*

L O N D O N

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signe of the *Grey-hound.* 1 6 1 6.





THE ANALYSIS

of the Psalme.

Psalm. 112. v. 9.

He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poore.
his righteousness endureth for ever, his home
shall be exalted with honour.

CHAP. I.

*The resolution of the whole Psalm, the parts of the
text, and the generall doctrines which arise out
of it.*



His Psalm is doctrinall; teach-
ing vs, that the godly and iust
man is blessed, and that whe-
ther we consider him simply
in himselfe, which is handled
from verse 1. to the tenth, or
compare him with the wicked
verse 10. In himselfe he is blessed: first, in respect
of his inward graces exercised in outward duties,
and secondly, in regard of many singular privi-
ledges, wherewith his graces and vertuous acti-

*See. r.
Analysis of the
whole Psalm.*

B

ons

ons are richly rewarded, and these are intermingled throughout the whole Psalme. His inward graces here specified are diuers. First, the feare of God. Secondly, delight in his commandements, verse 1. Thirdly, graciousnesse. Fourthly, mercy and compassion. Fifthly, iustice, verse 3. Sixthly, faith and affiance in God, vers. 7.

The outward actions, in which they are exercised, are shewing fauour, giuing and lending to those that stand in neede, moderation of his affaires with discretion, verse 5. and liberall imploying of his riches to all good vses, especially to the reliefe of the poore, verse 9. The priuiledges wherewith God blesteth him, are also many; as first the prosperous condition of his posteritie, verse 2. Secondly, the establishment of his outward estate, verse 3 and 9. Thirdly, abilitie and readinesse to relieue others in the time of aduersitie, verse 4. Fourthly, permanencie of prosperitie, and perpetuities of fame, verse 6 and 9. Fifthly, securitie and safetie in time of danger, verse 7 and 8. Secondly, the godly man is blessed, being compared with the wicked, seeing he is not onely miserable in himselfe, but also in the sight of the righteous mans happinesse, verse 10.

Sect 2.
The manner
of penning this
Psalme.

And this is the resolution of this Psalm. The manner of penning of it is also to be considered, which is very exact & accurate. For every hemisticke or halfe verse, beginneth in order with a letter of the Hebrew Alphabet; onely ther two last verses haue three letters, after euery pause or comma one, that
so

so the whole Alphabet might be expressed. The which was done to these ends; first to helpe the memorie, when as they referred euery sentence to a letter of the alphabet, with which they were familiarly acquainted. Secondly, to note the excellencie of the argument here handled, when as he was so curious and exact in the penning of it. Thirdly to teach vs, that there is a laudable vse of art and accurate labour in the seruice of God, if it be in an holy manner, graue, sober and tending to the vse of edifying; especially if the occasion be more then ordinary, as was the composing of this Psalme; which (as the learned think) with some others were penned by *David*, that they might be sung at their publike and solemne feasts, when as all the people were assembled together.

The summe of it is the blessednesse of the godly man, because he is inwardly endowed with the riches of spirituall graces, and outwardly aduanced in many excellent priuiledges, both presently in this life, and for euer in the life to come. So that thole words of the Apostle are an abridgement of it. 1. Tim. 4. 8. *Godlinesse is profitable vnto all things, hauing the promises of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

Sect. 3.
The summe of
the Psalme.

The maine scope at which the Psalmist aimeth, is to perswade all vnto godlinesse, seeing it is the onely way to attaine vnto blessednesse.

The scope

And so I come to the words themselues, which containe two things; first certaine duties or properties of the godly and blessed man, springing

Sect. 4.
The parts of
the text.

from the inward graces of his goodnesse and mercifulnesse. Secondly, the priuiledges wherewith God rewardeth them. The duties are two; the first generall, which is beneficence, bountie and openhandednes to al, in all good actions and workes of mercy, signified by those words, *He hath dispersed*. The second more speciall, namely his liberalitie towards the poore, in the next words, *he hath giuen to the poore*. The priuiledges are two; the first is the lasting benefit of his good workes; *his righteousnesse endureth for euer*. Secondly the establishment of his estate with honour, in the last words, *his horne shall be exalted with honour*.

Sec. 5.
1. Generall doctrine.
That blessednesse consisteth as much in graces and virtuous actions, as in priuiledges and rewards.

Psal. 1. 2. 1. 2.

But before we come to intreate of these parts particularly, we may generally obserue that the holy Ghost shewing the blessednesse of a godly man, doth make it to consist as much in his graces and vertuous actions, as in his priuiledges and rewards. From whence we learne, that we are as happy in our graces and good workes, as in the prerogatiues and rewards which doe accompany them. The which is manifest both by plaine testimonies of Scriptures, and by euident reasons, grounded vpon them. For the first, he is pronounced *blessed* in this Psalm, *who feareth the Lord, and delighteth greatly in his commandments*, vers. 1. and Psal. 119. 1. *Blessed are the vndefiled in the way, who walke in the law of the Lord*. 2. *Blessed are they that keepe his testimonies, and that seeke him with the whole heart*. So our Sauour pronounceth them *blessed, who heare the word of God and keepe it*.

Luk.

CHAP. I. *in his vertues as in rewards.*

3

Luk. 11.28. and saith vnto his Disciples, *if ye know these things, happy are ye if you doe them.* Yea this vertue and obedience vnto Gods law make vs blessed, not onely in the time when they are rewarded with prosperitie and worldly benefits, but euen in our greatest afflictions and persecutions, according to that, Psalme. 94.12. *Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law.*

Pro. 29.18.

Luk. 11.28.

Ioh. 13.17.

Pro. 29.18.

The reasons also to proue this are cleare and manifest. For first, vertue and goodnesse are so excellent in their owne nature, that they bring alwaies their reward with them. This appeareth in many places of this booke of the Psalines, where the Prophet preferreth Gods commandments and the keeping of them before gold and all manner of riches, as being much more profitable, and before the hony and the hony combe, as being much more sweete and pleasant. So the wise man commendeth wisdom, that is, the knowledge and practise of true godlinesse, before siluer, gold, and precious stones. And Iob telleth vs that it cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious Onix, or the Saphire; the gold and the christall cannot equall it, and the exchange of it shall not be for iewels of fine gold. And this euen the heathen man discerned by the light of nature; O vertue (saith he) if wee could behold thee with bodily eyes, with what admirable loue wouldst thou inflame vs. And another affirmeth, that in whom soeuer vertue is, there is nothing wanting

Psal. 94.12.

Sec. 6.

The reasons which proue the former point.

Psal. 19. 10 and 119. 72. 103. 127

Pro. 3. 14 & 8. 19

Iob. 23. 16. 17

In quo virtus sit, et nihil deesse ad beatum viuendum. Plinio. Cicero.

B 3

vnto

6 *That the godly man is blessed as well, &c.* CHAP. I.
vnto his happineſſe.

Secondly, we are as happy in our graces and vertues, as in the benefits which accrue vnto vs by them, becauſe they are the meanes through Gods mercy and free promiſes of all rewards and priuiledges: in which reſpect the Apoſtle ſaith, that *godlineſſe is profitable for all things, as hauing the promiſes of this life, and of that which is to come.* 1 Tim.

1 Tim. 4. 8.

+ 8.

Thirdly, becauſe they make vs more to reſemble God the chiefeſt bleſſedneſſe, whoſe excellencie conſiſteth in being, and doing good, and not in receiuing any other benefit by it.

Laſtly, grace and glory are inſeparably ioyned together, whereof it is that the Apoſtle comprifeſh our ſanctification vnder the name of our glorification, becauſe it is the firſt part of it which aſſureth vs of all the reſt. Rom. 8. 30.

Rom. 8. 30.

Seſt. 7.

The vſe of the
former doctrine.

*Gratuſ penitet
off probum.*

The conſideration of which point ſerueth to ſhew and condemne their folly and madneſſe, who will imbrace no vertue, nor doe any good worke *gratis* and without reward, but onely when they are hired with benefits; no not iuſtice it ſelfe without a bribe.

Secondly, it ſerueth for the comfort of all thoſe who are indued with Gods ſanctifying graces and continually exerciſed in vertuous actions, ſeeing they are bleſſed whatſoever their eſtate in the world be, whether they abound in earthly benefits, and flouriſh in proſperitie, or whether they want theſe, and contrariwiſe be in miſerie and afflicti-

Finally hereby we may trie and examine, whether we are happy, or miserable; for if we be rich in grace and good works, then are we truly blessed though we be sicke and weake in our bodies, distressed and penurious in our estates, and disgraced, and infamed in our name and reputation; but if in all these we haue our hearts desire, and be destitute of the other, our estate is wretched; for where there is no grace, there neither is there any blessednesse.

The second generall point to bee obserued is; that it is a propertie of a godly and blessed man, to be beneficent, ready to all good workes, and liberall towards the poore. For so farre forth are we godly, as we are imitators of the godly nature; but in nothing doe wee more resemble God, then when we imitate the goodnesse of his nature, and be bountifull and beneficiall to all that neede our helpe, which who so doe, are blessed, and none but they. So Pro. 14. 21. *Hee that hath mercy on the poore, happy is he.* And thus they are blessed in the worke it selfe, according to that Act. 20. 35. *It is a more blessed thing to giue, then to receiue:* and blessed also in their reward, as our sauiour telleth vs. Math. 5. 7. *Blessed are the mercifull, for they shall obtaine mercy,* and be also receiued into the place of blessednesse, according to that Mat. 25. 34. *Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdome prepared for you from the foundation of the world;* whereas contrariwise the mercilesse are

Sec. 8.
2. Doctrine.
That it is a
propertie of a
godly man to
be beneficent.

Pro. 14. 21.

Act. 20. 35.

Mat. 5. 7.

Math. 25. 34.

Iam. 2. 13.

Math. 25. 41.

Sec. 9.
Niggards are
rightly called
misers.

August.

Eccle. 10. 5.

Iam. 5. 3.

accursed; for they shall haue iudgement without mercy, that haue shewed no mercie, as it is Iam. 2. 13. As we may also see it in the last sentence, in which the iudge shall say vnto those who haue neglected these workes of mercie; *Depart from me ye cursed into the fire prepared for the diuell and his Angels; for I was hungrie, and ye fed me not, I was thirstie, and ye gaue me no drinke, &c.* Mat. 25. 41.

From whence wee may gather a speciall and forcible argument to make vs loath griple couetousnesse, and to loue liberalitie towards the poore and openhandednesse. For euen in the confluence of worldly wealth, niggards and sordidous men deserue the name of wretched misers, seeing none in truth are more desperately miserable: for they are not the maisters, but the slaues of their goods which they possesse, and haue no power to inioy them for their owne comfort: *Es quid est miserius misero non miserante se ipsum?* What is more miserable then a miser that pittiethe not himselfe? neither doe they vse them for the benefit of others. *Nam qui sibi nequam, cui bonus?* how can he be good to another, that is so euill to himselfe? yea as they are hurtfull vnto others in defrauding them of their right, or in spoyling them of that which they haue, by wrong and oppression; so they are most pernitiuous to themselues; *for they hould up their riches to be a witnessse against them at the latter day, when as the rust of their silver and gold shall eate their flesh like fire;* as it is Iam. 5. 3. They deprive themselues of their

their present benefits, and are depriv'd by God of their future blessednesse; they are in this life accursed of the poore, and in the life to come accursed of God. So also this may be an effectuall reason to perswade vs, that we embrace beneficence and be liberall in almesdeedes; seeing if we doe so, we shall be blessed in our worke, and also blessed in our wages: but otherwise though wee make neuer so glorious a profession of religion, and giue our liues in defence of it; yet if we be destitute of charitie, and barren in bearing the fruites of it, it will not profit vs, as the Apostle teacheth vs. 1. Cor. 13. 3. 1. am. 2. 14. 15.

2.

1. Cor. 13. 3.
1. am. 2. 14. 15.

CHAP. 2.

Of Beneficence, the subiect, object and properties of it.

ANd so I come from the generall obseruations, to the particular duties. The first whereof is beneficence, or readinesse to all good workes vnto all; in these words, *He hath dispersed*. For so I expound them, because hee speaketh of almesdeedes, in the next words, and it is not like that in these diuers phrases hee intendeth the same thing.

Sect. 1.

Exposition of
the words.

Secondly, because the metaphor taken from them who sow their seede will well beare it, who scatter it all abroad in the fildes, and not in the lowest places onely.

Thirdly, because the generall doctrine of be-
C neli-

1. Tim. 6. 18.

Heb. 13. 16.

Sect. 2.
Beneficence
what it is.

A. 9. 39.

Job 31.

Sect. 3.
Beneficence
commended
vnto all.

Heb. 13. 16.

Gal. 5. 22.

1. Tim. 6. 17. 18.

nificence, and the particular of almesdeedes are in other places ioyned together, as 1 Tim. 6. 18. *That they doe good and be rich in good workes, ready to distribute, willing to communicate,* and Heb. 13. 16. *To do good, and communicate, forget not &c.*

Now in speaking of this beneficence, I will first consider the durie it selfe, and secondly the properties of it, and how it is to be exercised. *The durie of beneficence it selfe is with a bountifull heart and hand, to doe good vnto all, who in any kinde whatsoever neede our helpe, by our riches, labour, care, counsaile, providence or howsoever.* So that this grace extendeth it selfe to all good workes, as building Schooles and Colleges, and maintaining the ministerie and meanes of Gods worship, erecting of Hospitals, and allowing yearely Pensions to Parishes, and corporations for the reliefe of their poore: or if wee want abilitie for these things, comforting the distressed, counsailling those that neede counsaile, helping the blinde and lame, by being eyes and feete vnto them.

And these duties of beneficence are commanded vnto all. Heb. 13. 16. and are numbred by the Apostle among the fruites of the spirit. Gal. 5. 22. and there ioyned with loue and faith, to shew that there is no true faith or loue where beneficence and goodnesse is wanting: but especially they are charged vpon rich men, because they haue the priuiledge of abilitie aboue others, and better meanes to expresse their inward bountie in the outward act. And howsoever the poorer sort may haue as large and liberall hearts

CHAP. 2. *Of the obiect of Beneficence.*

II

as they, and consequently may be as acceptable in the sight of God, because he looketh principally, not to the gift, but to the minde of the giuer; yet wanting riches they cannot shew vnto men the visible testimony of their bountifull hearts, nor produce their liberalitie into act, seeing they want the chiefe instrument of well doing, which are hence called goods, because by them we are enabled to doe good. And indeede this is the right vse of these rich talents which God hath lent vnto vs, that shall be so highly rewarded at the day of our great account; and the neglect hercof the hiding of those talents, which shall be at that day so severely punished.

Now the obiect of this our beneficence is very large; for it must extend vnto all men, according to that 1 Thel. 5.15. *But euer follow that which is good, both among your selues, and to all men.*

Sect. 4.
The obiect
of our benefi-
cence.
1. Thel. 5. 15.

Yea euen to our enemies, as the wise man teacheth vs, Pro. 25. 21. *If thine enemy be hungrie, giue him bread to eate, and if he be thirstie, giue him water to drinke.* And this our Sauour requireth. Mat.

Pro. 25. 21.

Matth. 5. 44. 45.

5. 44. *Loue your enemies, blesse them that curse you, doe good to them that hate you, &c.* the which is enforced with a strong reason, because herein wee shall be like our heavenly father, vers. 45. which if we neglect, and limit our beneficence to our friends, we shall be no better then publicans and sinners. Luk. 6. 32. 33.

Luk. 6. 32. 33.

But though our beneficence must extend to all, yet chiefly to those *who are of the houshold of faith.* Gal. 6. 10. And though wee be liberall in

Sect. 5.
That our be-
nificence must
chiefely extend
to the faithfull.
Gal 6 10.

scattering the seede of our good workes in all grounds which are ready to receiue it; yet principally we must cast it into those, which being fertile and fruitfull, will yeelde vnto vs the best increase. Now such are the faithfull, who being the true members of Christ, he will acknowledge what is done vnto them as done vnto himselfe. Mat. 25.33. which consideration moued *Dauid* to extend his goodnesse and bountie to the *Saints* that are upon the earth, and to the excellent, as appeareth, Psal. 16.3. And the Apostle *Paul* to commend the faith of the Ephesians, in the Lord Iesus, when as he saw it approued by their loue towards all the Saints. Eph. 1.15.

Mat. 25.33.

Psal. 16.3.

Eph. 1.15.
sect 6.

The properties of beneficence. First, that it be liberall and bountifull.

The properties of this beneficence are diuers, and they are all implied in this metaphor of dispersing or scattering seede. As first in respect of the quantitie, it must be liberall and bountifull, and we must *dare multum multis*, doe much good vnto many. For though a man be neuer so sparing in other things, yet he will not be niggardly in sowing his seede, but will scatter and cast it from him in full handfulls, as much as is sufficient, and the ground will well beare; because he knoweth that the fruitfull haruest will returne all againe with large increase: and so the godly and blessed man though he be hard in idle expences and superfluities, as in rioting, gaming, adorning the backe and pampering the bellie, yet hee is bountifull in doing good, and scattereth the seedes of his beneficence with a liberall hand, because he knoweth that after the seeder time the haruest

haruest will follow, and then all will be returned with great aduantage, which argument the Apostle vseth to stirre vp the Corinthians to this liberall beneficence, because *he that soweth bountifully, shall reape bountifully*, and he that soweth sparingly, shall reape sparingly. 2 Cor. 9. 6. And this the wise man obserued. Pro. 11. 24. *There is (saith he) that scattereth, and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more then is meete, and commeth to pouertie.* 25. *The liberall soule shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered againe.* In which regard one saith well, *Non qui habet & seruat, sed qui impertit est diues, & impertitio, non autem possessio diuites facit.* Not he that hath wealth and keepeth it, but he that bestoweth it is rich, neither is it the possession, but the laying out of riches, that makes men rich. For he that soweth and gathereth more, is he who giueth earthly things, and gathereth heauenly and eternall: but he who gathereth on earth, and bestoweth it not, hee putteth his treasure into a broken bagge. Hag. 1. 6.

2. Cor. 9. 6.

Pro. 11. 24. 25.

Clement Alex-
and. p. 249.

lib. 3.

Hag. 1. 6.

And this bountie in our beneficence God requireth. Deut. 15. 11. *Thou shalt open thine hand wide vnto thy brother, to thy poore and needy in thy Land: especially of rich men, who must not onely giue a portion of their wealth to good vses; but also in some fit proportion to their meanes,* for the Apostle would haue rich men charged to bee rich in good workes, *euens as God hath giuen them all things richly to enjoy.* 1. Tim. 6. 17. 18. which who so neglecteth, is not onely a miser, but a foole, seeing he depriuerh himselfe of the frutes

Sect. 7.

Bountie in our
beneficence is
required.

Deut. 15. 11.

Ioh. 3. 16. 17.

1. Tim. 6. 17. 18.

fruites of haruest, because he cannot finde in his heart to sow his seede; yea looſeth not onely an earthly croppe, but the rich haruest of heauenly happinesse, because hee will not forgoe for the present momentany trifles and earthly vanities.

Sect 8.

No bountie in
worldlings to
charitable vies.

And thus it appeareth that the beneficence of the godly man is bountifull. The contrary wee may obserue in wicked worldlings: for either they are misers and not liberall at all, or quite contrarie in their bountie to the blessed man. For where God commandeth them to spend, namely in beneficence and workes of mercie, there they spare, and their hands like *Ieroboams* are so dried and shrunke vp in the sinnewes, that they cannot stretch them out to doe good. Or if they doe, it is to giue some pennie almes out of many thousands, vpon some qualme of present pitie, or to keep their consciēce sleeping, that they may not accuse and torment them for their vnmercifulnesse. But where God biddeth spare, there they spend like prodigals, as on dogges and harlots, in feasting and banquetting, in building and brauerie, in gaming and reuelling, and all other excesse and riot. And whereas the godly man spareth from his superfluties, yea sometimes necessities, that he may haue the more to spend in bountie and beneficence; he onely spareth in the workes of mercie, that he may haue the more to spend vpon his sinfull vanities. But as the nigard *that soweth not, shall not reape*, so the prodigall worldling that *soweth onely to the flesh, shall of the flesh*

CHAP. 2. *Of the properties of Beneficence.*

15

flesh scape corruption, as it is, Gal. 6.8.

Gal. 6.8.

The second propertie is alacritie and cheere-
fulnesse; the which is also implied by the meta-
phor. For the husbandman casteth his seede in-
to the ground, not onely willingly, but also
cheerefully and ioyfully; not in respect of his
present parting with his seede, but because he ex-
pecteth a fruitfull haruest. And this the Lord re-
quireth in all good workes, according to that
Eccle. 9. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to doe, doe* Eccle. 9. 10.
it with thy might; and that of the Apostle. Tit. 3. 1. *Put them in minde to bee ready to every good worke.* Tit. 3. 1.

And especially in our beneficence and workes
of mercie; because it is not so much the outward
act of the hand, as the inward service of the hart
wherein he delighteth. So 2. Cor. 9. 7. *Every man* 2. Cor. 9. 7.
according as hee purposeth in his heart, so let him
give, not grudgingly, or of necessitie, for God loneth a
cheerfull giver, and Rom. 12. 8. the Apostle re- Rom. 12. 8.
quireth, that *hse who sheweth mercie, doe it with*
cheerfulnessse. And this the Lord chiefly re-
specteth and rewardeth; for so it is said, Pro. 11.
25. *The liberall soule shall be made fat*; not the hand,
but the soule and heart. An example whereof we
haue in *David*, who was accepted for his readi-
nesse to builde the temple, though he neuer per-
formed it in act, but onely had a desire to builde
it. 2 Sam. 7. And in the particular case of giuing
almes, that *if there be a willing minde, it is accepted*
according to that a man hath, and not according to
that he hath not. 2. Cor. 8. 12.

Pro. 11. 25.

2. Sam. 7.

2. Cor. 8. 12.

Yea this euen the heathen man discerned, and
there-

Seneca.

therefore defined a benefit, to bee a louing and voluntary action, *tribuens gaudium, capiensque tribuendo*, yeelding ioy, and receiuing in yeelding it: and affirmeth that a benefit cannot be touched with the hand, but is seene with the minde: for there is great difference betweene the matter of a benefit, and the benefit it selfe: and therefore gold and siluer is not the benefit, but the good will of the giuer, for they may be lost, but the benefit still remaineth.

SECT. 10.
Cheerfulness
in the counte-
nance.

Now this cheerfulnesse sheweth it selfe in our countenance, words and actions.

For the first, benefits are to bee done with a cheerefull looke and smiling countenance, which addeth much to the grace of a good deede, when the eye of the giuer telleth the receiuer that the benefit bestowed is a token sent vnto him from a louing heart: whereas contrariwise a foure looke much blemisheth it, as though the hand had stollen it from the heart at vnawares, and the eye were displeased when it discouereth the theft.

SECT. 11.
Cheerfulness
in words.

Secondly, the cheerfulnesse of the heart appeareth in our words, when as we speake comfortably to the party vnto whom we doe good. And surely then are these well suted together, *Quando adijcimus bona verba, bonis rebus*: when we ioine good words, with good deedes, which is to speak to his heart who receiueth the gift, and doubleth the sweetenesse of any benefit. Contrary whereunto are proud speeches, insolent and bitter expostulations, which turne a benefit into an iniury,

rie, and sometime cause a man by a gift to purchase an enemy, *Nam iniuria altius quam merita descendunt*, wrongs pearce deeper then gifts, and the memorie taketh fast hold of them, when as it easily suffereth these to slip out. To this point the sonne of *Syrach* speaketh notably. cap. 18. verse *Eccle. 18. 15.*

15. *My sonne blemish not thy good deedes, neither vse uncomfortable words when thou giuest anything.*

16. *Shall not the dew assuage the heate? so is a word better then a gift.* 17. *is not a word better then a gift?*

but both are with a gracious man. 18. *A foole will upbrayde churlishly, and a gift of the envious consumeth the eyes.*

Thirdly, it appeareth in the action, when a man doth good speedily and readily. For as one saith, *Beneficentia est virtus quam moram not patitur*. Beneficence is a vertue which disliketh all delaies; and as *Seneca* telleth vs, *Omnis benignitas properat*, all goodnesse is quicke of hand and swift of foote, and hareth as well the paralyticall shaking and staggering of those, who doubt whether to giue or no, as the goutie lamenesse of such as after they are resolu'd to giue, make but slow hast. For these delaies shew vnwillingnesse. *Et qui moratur, neganti proximus est*, he that delayeth a benefit is the next dore to him that denieth: euen as on the other side, a quicke hand is an euident signe of a free heart, for *proprium est libenter facientis, cito facere*, it is the propertie of him that giueth willingly, to giue it speedily. And as this graceth the gift in respect of the giuer, so it doubleth the benefit to him that receiueth it. *Nam bis dat qui cito dat*.

Seneca.

Eccle. 18. 15.

Seet. 12. Cheerefulnesse in the action.

First, when a man giueth speedily. De benef. lib. 2. c. 15.

Seneca lib. 2.

*in ista 7. 2. 1735
7. 2. 1735.*

dat, he giueth twise that giueth quickly, and the swifter that a benefit commeth the sweeter it tasteth. There must then be no stay in these actions of beneficence, but onely that which is caused through the receiuers shamefastnes, for a benefit looseth his grace, when it sticketh to his fingers who is about to bestow it, as though it were not giuen but plucked from him. And so the receiuer praiseth not his benefactors bonnty, but his owne importunitie, because he doth not seeme to haue giuen, but to haue held too weakely against his violence.

*Sen. 13.
That wee
should preuent
mens suites
with our readi-
nesse.
Sero beneficium
dedit qui rogans
d. dit.
Seneca.
Eti. 2. 1. 14.*

Psal 21. 7. 7.

*Seneca de Ben.
2. 2. 1. 14.*

It must then be the benefactors care to preuent with his readinesse their suites who neede his helpe; and like the Astrologer, hee must diuine at the wants of the poore before they lay them open, imitating the sunne which giueth light, heate and vitall influence without intreatie. He must be like the inhabitants of the land of *Tema*, who brought water to him who was thirstie, and preuented with their bread him that fled; yea he must labour to be like our heauenly father, who as the Psalmist speaketh, not onely giueth vs our hearts desire, and withholdeth not the request of our lips, but also preuenteth vs with his blessings of goodnesse, and often giueth before we aske. Psal. 21. 2. 3. And this also is of singular vse in the bestowing of benefits, and maketh the gift much more acceptable. *Nam illud beneficium incundum, victurumque in animo scias, quod obuiam venit:* that benefit is most delightfull, and will longest liue in the minde of the receiuer, which stayeth not till hee come to
• seeke

seeke it, but commeth out to meete him in the midde way. For it is a torment and heauie burthen to an ingenuous minde to craue, the which so presseth the heart, that oftentimes it maketh the blood to come into the face, which who so with his readinesse preuenteth doubleth the benefit. And if this bee omitted, the gift looseth some part of his grace, because it is purchased with paine, and commeth not freely and without cost, *Nam non tulit gratis qui cum rogasset accepit*, there is nothing dearer then that which is bought with the price of many praies: and the benefactour also looseth some part of his thanks; for a benefit pearceth the heart like a dart; diuersly in respect of the diuers manner of casting it, slightly if it bee cast faintly, and deeply when as it commeth forcibly, and with a good will.

But if this hath beene omitted to preuent suits with our readinesse, yet at least the cheerefulnesse of the heart must shew it selfe in willing entertaining the first motion: and if our benefit haue not sought him out before hee sued, yet at least let him finde it when he sueth. *Atque etiam dum rogat erogemus*, and let vs giue euen whilest hee asketh; or if necessary occasion causeth any stay, yet let vs by all meanes not seeme to doubt and deliberate whether we shall giue or no; for, *proximus est neganti qui dubitauit, nullamque meretur gratiam*: he that doubteth deserueth small thanks, because hee is next neighbour to him that denieth; *nam qui tarde dedit, diu noluit*, hee that was

Sect. 14.
We must at least willingly entertaine the first motion.

Seneca.

Pro. 3. 27.

slow in giuing, was long vnwilling. And this readie inuertaining the first motion the wise man requireth. Pro. 3. 27. *Withhold not good from thy neighbour when it is in thy power to doe it; say not to him goe and come againe, and to morrow I will giue thee, when thou hast it by thee.* For nothing is more tedious then to hang long in suspence, and wee indure with more patience to haue our hopes behedded and quickly killed, then to be racked and tortured with long delaies, according to that, Pro. 13. 12. *Hope deferred maketh the heart sicke, but when the desire commeth, it is a tree of life.*

Pro. 13. 12.

But especially we must auoide delaies in giuing after we haue granted; for there is nothing more bitter then to bee forced to make a new suite for that which hath already beene obtained, and to finde more difficultie in the deliuey, then in the grant.

Sect. 15.

The third propertie is constancie in doing good.

The third propertie of beneficence is constancie, and assiduitie in doing good; the which is also implied by the metaphor; for the husbandman contenteth not himselfe to haue sowed his seede in former yeares, but he continueth to sow it still to the end of his life: and though the croppe be sometime so small, that the seede it selfe is scarce returned: yet he will not bee discouraged, but will againe cast it into the ground, in hope of better successe. And thus must we also doe in sowing the seedes of our beneficence, casting them daily into the grounds which we finde fitted and prepared, and not thinking it enough to adorne our selues with them, as with our best apparel, which

we

we onely put on on high and festinall daies, wee must make it to bee our daily exercise; *benefacta benefactis peragentes* (as one saith) making one good deede an introduction vnto another, and neuer leauing to doe good, so long as there is any power in our hands to doe it. And vnto this the Apostle exhorteth. 2. Thes. 3. 13. *Brethren bee not wearie of well-doing*, and 1. Thes. 5. 15. *Euer follow that which is good, both among your selues, and: o all men*: wherein we shall imitate our heavenly father, and approue our selues to bee his children, who reneweth his mercies vnto vs euery morning, and multiplieth his blessings vpon vs euery day with a new supply, and so we shall be sure to receiue a rich reward, for if we be *stedfast and immoueable, alwaies abounding in these workes of the Lord, wee may bee assured that our labour shall not bee in vaine in the Lord*, as it is promised. 1. Cor. 15. 58. 15. 58.

Yea our care must be, as to grow in grace, so to bring forth new fruites of good workes, imitating herein the Church of *Thiatiara*, whose last workes excelled the first, Apoc. 2. 19. Seeing we cannot otherwise be sure to be constant in them; for they who goe not forward but stand at a stay, will not long stay in their standing. And in this the beneficence of a godly man differeth from that which is in worldlings, who doe some good workes of mercy by fits, but are not constant in well doing; and also from that which is in hypocrites who doe some good deedes for praise or profit, but yet desist when their turne is serued; the same

Thiatiara
1. Thes. 3. 13.
1. Thes. 5. 15.
Gal. 6. 9.

1. Thes. 3. 13.
1. Thes. 5. 15.
Gal. 6. 9.

Sect. 16
We must in-
crease in doing
good.
Apoc. 2. 19.

of their charitie lasting no longer then the fuell doth wherewith it is nourished. But these haue onely a greene blade of an outward profession, and neuer come to the bearing of ripe fruites; they runne well for a time, but get not the garland, because they doe not hold out to the end of the race. They are not true Christians, but onely dead images of them, like vnto that which *Nebuchadnezer* saw in a dreame, which had an head of gold, the middle parts of siluer, his thighes of brasse, his legges of iron and his feete part of iron and part of clay; for so the head and first beginnings of their workes are golden and glorious, but the last and latter ends base and of no worth.

Dan. 4. 3. 1.

Sect. 17.
The fourth
propertie
which is e-
qualitie.

Now that we may thus constantly hold out in well doing vnto the end, there is required in the last place, that equalitie and proportion bee obserued in discrete fitting of our workes of mercy and beneficence vnto our state and abilitie, that they may match, but not exceede it. For we haue not a sea of sufficiencie which cannot be drawne drie, no nor yet is our estate in it selfe a springing fountaine, which is no sooner emptie, but presently it filleth againe: but it is like a poole or standing water, or (as it were) a small streame which is fed and supplied by the spring of Gods bounty; and therefore wee must not let it flow out faster then it commeth in, but still preferue the maine stocke (vnlesse it be in cases of great necessity) and keepe the pond in a conuenient fulnesse, letting the ouerplus continually runne ouer to good v-
ses,

ses, for otherwise there will be an intermission in the streame of our bountie, till the emptinesse be replenished, and too much at one time will cause necessarily too little at another.

But yet because the Scriptures require, that we should be bountifull and plentiful in good works, this should increase our care and diligence in preserving and increasing of our estates, by all lawful meanes, in acquisition and getting by our honest and painefull labours in our callings, and by our frugall husbanding and thriftie spending of our goods, that so having greater plentie we may be the richer in good workes. According to that Eph. 4. 28. Otherwise though we cannot iustly be condemned of niggardlinesse and vncharitableness, because we doe but little good, seeing we cannot goe beyond our tether, nor extend our good workes beyond the reach of our abilitie; yet may we be condemned of sloath and negligence, or wasting and ill husbandrie, whereof it is that we haue no better abilitie.

Sect. 18.
Good husbandrie required that we may do good deedes.

Ephes. 4. 28.

CHAP. 3.

Of Almesdeedes, and first of the action of giuing, and the properties of it.

AND so I come from the generall dutie of beneficence, to the more speciall ducie of almes deedes, expressed in these words, *hee hath giuen to the poore*. In which consider two things; the action, and the obiect. Of which I wil intreate,

Sect. 1.
Of almesdeedes and first of the action of giuing.

first seuerally, then iointly. The action is giuing, which is a free and liberall contract, whereby the propertie and vse of some good thing, is alienated from one and conferred upon another, out of the good will and bountie of the benefactor. And it hath two extreames, the one, in excesse, lauish prodigality; and the other in defect, base niggardlinesse. Betweene which extreames this vertuous action holdeth the meane, being guided with true wisdom, iudgement and discretion (as all other vertues are, according to that, Psal. 112. 5. *A good man sheweth fauour and lendeth; he will guide his affaires with discretion.*) And in respect of the quantity of the gift, it keepeth a good proportion, both in respect of his ability, who giueth, and his necessity, who receiueth. And hereof it is that these almes-deedes are called *righteousnesse* in the Scriptures (as hereafter we shall see) to teach vs, that they are to be done iustly, according to the rule of equi-ty; due respect being had both to our owne state and meanes, and the necessities and wants of our poore brethren.

Sect. 2.
Moderation in
giuing according to our
abilitie.

1. Cor. 16. 1.

In respect of the former, it is said that the godly and blessed man *giueth to the poore, Dat non profundit*, he giueth but not wasteth, he so giueth as that he may still giue, and because *it is a more blessed thing to giue, then to receiue and craue*, he preserveth the stocke and store house of his bountie, that by continuall giuing hee may continue his greater blessednesse. So the Apostle appointing a collection for the Saints, inioyneth euery one *to lay vp in store as God hath prospered him*. Euery one there-

CHAP. 3. *That the godly man giueth with discretion.*

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therefore in his almesdeedes, is to respect his own abilitie, and to giue neither aboue nor vnder his meanes. The which a man obserueth, when as he so giueth, as that he may be able to hold on in the same proportion, and that rather with increase then abatement. So the heathen man could say, *Dabo egenti, sed ut ipse non egeam; succurro perituro, sed ut ipse non peream.* I will so giue to the needy, as that I doe not neede my selfe; I will relieue those who are ready to perill, but yet so, as that I my selfe may not perish. Howbeit this rule houldeth onely in ordinary, for the extreame necessitie of the poore (as wee shall see hereafter) and the generall necessitie of the Church, bring a *non obstante*, and dispence with it; as we may see in the Acts of the Apostles, where the Saints that had houses and lands, sold them, that they might thereby supply the great wants of the faithful liuing vnder grievous persecution, the necessitie of the times vrging and requiring it. The which was not proper to those times, but should now also be put in practise, vpon the like occasion.

S. nets.

Chap. 4. 5.

Secondly, we are to order with wisdom the act of giuing, in respect of the parties estate who is to receiue our almes, bestowing more or lesse, as his wants require. For hee that giueth more then sufficient, *non dat sed diu*, he doth not properly out of charitie giue an almes, but out of bountie enricheth with benefits. And he that giueth lesse then their necessitie requieth. *Non pauperem sustentat, sed paupertatem*, hee cureth not the

Sect. 3.

We must giue according to our neighbours needs.

E

disease

disease of pouertie, but onely giueth some present ease; and if he apply not fresh remedies, he hath but prolonged their paines, by making it more tolerable, which extremitie would soone haue ended and quite taken away.

And therefore as the godly and blessed man doth in his giuing almes auoide that extreame of excessse, so much more the contraiy extreame of defect; and chooseth rather to offend on the sauer side; because it is better the poore man should take a slight surfer, through too much fulnesse, then to be pinched and famished for want of necessaries; and that the mercifull mans almes should aspire to the title of bountie and benedicence, then to bee abased with the name of needrenesse and niggardly hardnesse.

Sect. 4.
We must so
giue to one as
that we do not
neglect many.

Yet becaue great benefits can reach but to few, and almesdeedes must extend to many, wisdom as much as may auoideth both extremis, and so giueth to one, as that many others may not be neglected. And therefore the godly man maketh wisdom to deale the dole, because nothing is well done which is done without it. For as the hathen man saith, *non est beneficiū nisi quod ratione datur, quoniam ratio omnis honesti comes est.* It is not a benefit which is not giuen with reason, because reason is the guide and companion of all honest and vertuous actions. And in this regard almesdeedes are fitly likened vnto sowing of seede, wherein the rule is, *manu ferendum non thyllico*, the seede is to be cast out of the hand, and not out of the whole sacke, and strained through the

Sence.

Τὸ χίρην δὲ
ἐπιφέρει, ὡς καὶ
ἐν τῷ 1. κεφ. 1. κεφ.
1. κεφ. 1. κεφ.

the fingers, that it may be scattered abroade and so goe farre, and not powred on heapes, which were *non ferere* but *congerere*, not to sow but to surcharge the ground with superfluitie in one place, and to cast nothing in another. And thus in giuing almes, we must cast the seede of our beneficence with an euen and indifferent hand, not vpon one or two alone, but vpon many, for it is the nature of goodnesse, as the schoolemen speake to be *diffusiusa sui*, extending it selfe to the benefit of many. The which is also signified by that phrase of *casting our bread vpon the face of the waters*, where hee vseth the plurall number to intimate vnto vs, that the object of our bountie should be many, and not one or some few; and by the phrase of communicating, which the Apostle vseth. 1. Tim. 6. 18. which implyeth thus much that our almesdeedes must bee common vnto many. And it is plainly expressed by the wise man. Eccles. 11. 2. *Giue a portion to seauen, and also vnto eight*, where by a certaine number an vncertain is signified, but yet thus much is required of vs, that we confine not our liberality vnto a few, but extend our goodnes to a numerous company.

Againe whereas almesdeedes haue here the title of giuing giuen vnto them, and a gift is a free and liberal action: we hence gather, that they are to be done willingly and cheerefully, and not grudgingly and repiningly. The which the Lord forbidderh and condemneth. Deut. 15. 10. *Thou shalt surely giue vnto thy poore brother, and thine heart*

Eccle. 11. 1.

1. Tim. 6. 18.

Eccle. 11. 2.

Seet 5.
We must giue
almes cheere-
fully.

Deut. 15. 10.

1. Pet. 4. 9.

shall not be griued when thou gineſt vnto him; becauſe that for this thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſſe thee in all thy workes, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand vnto. For as in all other duties, ſo in this, the Lord

2. Cor. 9. 7.

more requireth the inward ſeruice of the heart then the outward ſeruice of the hand, according to that, 2. Cor. 9. 7. *Euery man as he purpoſeth in his heart, ſo let him giue, not grudgingly or of neceſſitie, for God loueth a cheerefull giuer.* An example

2. Cor. 9. 1.

of which cheerefulneſſe we haue in the faithfull of the Church of Corinth, who were ſo forward in miniſtring to the poore Saints, that the Apoſtle profeſſeth it needeſſe to remember them of it. 2. Cor. 9. 1. Yea an almesdeede is a gift not onely vnto men, but euen to God himſelfe (as he eſteemeth it) from whom we haue receiued what we giue and all good things beſides; and hereof it is called a ſacrifice; yea ſuch a ſacrifice wherein he chiefly delighteth, Heb. 13. 16. Now all Chriſtian ſacrifices are freewill oblations, which are to be offered with ioy and cheerefulneſſe; and if they be ſoured with the leauen of grudging and murmuring, they are made odious vnto God.

Heb. 13. 16.

Sect. 6.

Cheerefulneſſe
in countenance.

Now this alacritie of heart, diſcouereth it ſelfe in the countenance, words, and actions. For firſt a willing minde cauſeth a cheereful countenance; the which is neceſſary in theſe actions of liberality, wherein it is not fit to haue *manum apertam & vultum clauſum*, an open hand and a cloſe and cloudie looke, which though it ſhould not proceede from any auerſeneſſe and vnwillingnes in the

the heart, yet it serueth for no good vse, but like
a scarecrow affrigheth the poore, so as they can-
not with any bouldnesse or confidence come to
askereliefe, nor feede securely vpon those seedes
of beneficence which are cast vnto them. And
this the sonne of *Syrach* requireth in these acti-
ons of liberalitie. Cap. 35. 9. *In all thy gifts* (saith *Eccle. 35. 9.*
he) *shew a cheerefull countenance*, which that wee
may doe, let vs remember that the liberall looke
hath the promise of blessednesse, as well as the
liberall action, according to that, *Pro. 22. 9. Hee*
that hath a bountifull eye shall be blessed, for he giveth *Pro. 22. 9.*
of his bread to the poore. But this hope of blessed-
nesse many rich worldlings make voide vnto
themselves, who either like euill nurses are so
hard of milke, that it cannot be drawn from them
without paine and irkesomenesse, the which they
expresse by their sower looks and wretched and
wrinkled foreheads; or else couer the poores na-
kednesse and relieue their wants, as *Noahs* sonnes
(with a better minde) did couer the nakednesse
of their father, with their faces turned another
way. For as some, browbeate the poore with
proud, soure, and seuerelookes; so there are o-
thers as bad as they, who turne away their eyes
and faces from them, as though they were such
an eyefore as might not be indured, nor be look-
ed vpon without grieve and vexation. And this
they doe, because they feare to be infected with
the contagion of the poore mans misery, so much
as in a sympathie and fellowfeeling of his cala-
mitie; and therefore as men that come neere

vnto them who are infected with the plague or leprosie, so doe they shunne them; or (if they stand in their way) turne their faces from them; and out of a desperate resolution to giue them nothing, they will not so much as looke vpon their miseries, least their consciuous eyes should checke their churlish hearts, and put them in minde of their barbarous inhumanitie. But let such be assured that as they turne away their eies from the poore in the day of their misery, so the Lord will turne away his face from them in the day of their calamitie; and as they haue stopped their eares at the crie of the poore, so they themselves *shall crie, and God will not heare them*, as it is.

PRO. 21. 13.

Sect. 7.
Cheerfulness
in our words
and speeches.

2. Cor. 9. 5.

Secondly, the alacritie in the heart appeareth in the mildenesse and sweetnesse of our speeches, which the Apostle would haue euer conioyned with our almesdeedes; whereof it is that he calleth them *ἀλογία*. 2. Cor. 9. 5. to note vnto vs, that as these good workes and good words are comprehended vnder the same name, so in the action they should neuer be seuered. And surely these cheerefull and kinde words are very necessary to be ioyned with those workes of mercy; for poertie and want deiecteth the minde, and the discouery of it affecteth the heart of those that see and craue, not opely with shame, but also with feare and ielousie, least they be thought of their benefactors to be too bold and troublesome; in which respects there is great neede, that they should not onely speake to their suites, but to
their

CHAP. 3. *Of the properties of almesdeedes.*

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their hearts, and by kinde and louing language apply vnto them such cordials of comfort, as may preferue them from fainting in their feares. And this the sonne of *Syrach* requireth, chap. 4. v. 8. *Let it not grieue thee to bow downe thine eare to the poore, and giue him a friendly answere with meekenesse.* Eccles. 4. 8.

Contrary whereunto is the practise of those, who ioyne with their almes proud expostulations, harsh words, and vpbraiding speeches: feeding the poore, as they feede their vntaught dogges which they would haue at command, for when they offer them meate, they doe withall so sneape and rebuke them, that they dare scarcely take it, but are ready to let it fall out of their hands and mouthes, for feare of beating. Of which kinde of men one speaketh fitly. There are some (saith he) that when their poore brethren craue necessities of them, before they will giue any thing, doe cast out against them, contumelious words: and performing these offices of pietie at length indeede, doe first spoile the grace of their bountie with opprobrious tearmes; wherein they seeme not freely to doe a worke of mercie, but to make satisfaction for the iniuries which they haue offered, when they giue an almes after such contumelies. Others there are that chide the poore for comming so often, and crauing againe after they haue once or twice relieved them. But of these I may (with *Chrysostome*) demaund. Doe they not therefore want meate, because thou hast before times relieved them? why then doest thou not binde thine owne bellie to Gregorie.

*Chrysost. in 1o.
Math. Homil. 36
Tom. 2. Col. 328.*

the same conditions? why doest thou not say to thy stomacke when it craueth meate, thou wast filled yesterday and the day before, and why doest thou now againe desire more? Yea contrariwise thou almost burstest thine owne bellie in filling it beyond measure, but turnest away thy face from the poore crauing a little to satisfie his hunger, because he asketh againe of thee; on whom thou oughtest the rather for this cause take pittie, because he is pinched with no small necessitie, which forceth him so often to come vnto thee. And secondly wee might demandaund of them, why by the same reason they sue often vnto God for new benefits, seeing they haue already receiued many from him, sauing that it is to be feared they trouble him not much with many suites and praiers, and that what they haue, they receiue it rather out of his meere bountie, then their own earnest suite and importunitie; for otherwise the experience of their owne wants, and Gods infinite mercie in relieuing and supplying them, would moue them to thinke of the necessitie of the poore, and make them more compassionate in helping and succouring them. Let vs not therefore staine our good actions with euill words, neither after we haue giuen let vs vpbraide, wherein we shall but discover our folly; *for a foole (as the sonne of Syrach telleth vs) when he giueth a gift will vpbraid churlishly, and the gift of the enuious consumeth the eyes.*

Eccle. 41. 22.

and 18. 13.

See 8.

Cheerefulnesse
appeareth by
ready giuing.

Thirdly, this cheerefulnesse sheweth it selfe in the manner of the action; when it is performed readily

readily and speedily. For a gilt or almesdeede should not be drawne from the giuer by the importunitie of the receiuer, but rather the importunitie should be on his part that giueth, in pressing the beneuolence vpon him with vndeniable earnestnesse, when as he discerneth in him any modest bashfulnesse or backwardnesse in receiving of it. An example whereof we haue in the Church of Corinth, of whom the Apostle testifieth, that in communicating to the necessitie of the Saints, *They were to their power, and beyond their power willing of themselves, praying them with much intreatie that they would receive their gifts.*

And with this readinesse must be ioyned speedinesse in giuing; and taking our intelligence of our neighbours wants from the report of others, or else reading them in their pale visage, heauie countenance or poore habit, we must let our almes preuent their suite, and giue them reliefe before they craue it. For (as one saith) *Hac est perfecta misericordia, &c. this is the perfectiō of mercie, that we preuent the suites of the needie, and relieue the hungrie before they aske; and that mercy is imperfect (and it selfe needeth mercy) which is escorted with importunate prayers.* And as it is maiimed in it selfe, so not so acceptable to the poore, for *ingratum est beneficium quod diu inter manus dantis habet.* That benefit is vnwelcome and scarce worthy thanks which hath long sticke to the hands of the giuer. And therefore herein let vs labour to be perfect as our heauenly father is perfect

Sect. 9.
2. in giuing
speedily.

August. Homil.
39. Tom. 10.

Sensae.

fect, who oftentimes supplieth our wants before we craue, and conferreth vpon vs many benefits, which in particular we neuer desired.

Sect 10.
Reasons which
may moue vs to
giue speedily.
1. Cor. 8. 4 & 9. 1

Pro. 3. 17.

And this speedinesse in relieuing the poore is implied by that name *σπαστρια* which the Apostle giueth vnto almesdeedes, signifying such a mitigation, as is performed with speede and diligence, being deriued from a word which signifieth to hasten and make speede, and is expressly required by the Wise-man in the doing of these workes of mercie. Pro. 3. 27. *Say not to thy neighbour goe and come againe, and to morrow I will giue thee, when thou hast it by thee.* Vnto which speedy and present dispatch in giuing almes we may be moued by these reasons. First, because in respect of our neighbour, an almes is most seasonable in the time of want, and the gift doubled by his desire that receiueth it. Againe, what knowest thou if to morrow he will neede thy gift, the Lord otherwise providing for him? and so thou shalt loose a fit opportunitie of doing good, because thou diddest refuse it when it was offered; which will turne thee to more damage and hurt, then to neglect the sowing of thy seede in time most seasonable. Furthermore it may be that through these delaies thy almes will come too late, like a good gale of winde after shipwracke, when his health is lost for want of reliefe, or state ruined for want of seasonable helpe, and so thy late and vntimely almes will doe him little good. For it fa-
reth with men in their strength and state, as with a leake in a shippe, or a breach of waters, which
may

CHAP. 3. *That almes must be giuen to the poore only.*

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may be easily stopped and stayed at the first appearing, but if be let alone, will within a while grow remedlesse. Finally, how canst thou tell whether the next time he commeth, thou shalt be able to relieue his wants, seeing for thine vnthankfulnesse and mis-employment of Gods talents he may take thy goods and meanes of doing good from thee, and make thee to neede the helpe of others, or thee from thy goods, and so thou shalt haue no power to dispose them? And this reason the wise man giueth to moue vs vnto speedy and present giuing. Pro. 3. 27. *Withhold* Pro. 3. 27.
not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to doe it: and the Apostle inioyneth vs, *when we haue opportunitie, to doe good vnto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith.* Gal. 6. 10.

Gal. 6. 10.

CHAP. 4.

That the poore should be the object of our bountie.

AND thus much of the action: the object of See 1.
 our liberalitie is the poore: whence wee That the poore should be the object of our liberalitie.
 learne that though there are many waies, whereby men expresse much bountie and liberalitie in spending their riches, yet this onely doth approue a man to be godly and blessed, when as he giueth freely to the poore and needy. And this our Sauour sheweth. Luk. 14. 12. *When thou makest a dinner or supper, call not thy friends nor thy bre-* Luk. 14. 12.

That almes must be given to the poore only. CHAP. 4.
threw, neither thy kinsmen and rich neighbours; least they also bid thee againe, and a recompence bee made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poore, the maimed, the lame, the blinde; and thou shalt bee blessed, for they cannot recompence thee, for thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the iust. So that if we would be blessed in our bountie, the poore must be the object of it. For they are the ground in which the seede of beneficence must be sowne ifeuer we meane to reape an harvest of happines. They are the bankers to whom we must deliuer Gods talents, if we would haue them increase in our maisters estimate, and so receiue the gracious reward of our faithfull seruice. Finally, these are Gods factours, vnto whom if we deliuer our goods, the Lord himselfe will acknowledge the debt, and will surely pay vs with great advantage.

*Sect. 2.
 That the liberality of the worldlings will not profit them.*

And therefore they, the streames of whose bountie doe runne another way, may well impair by their expenses their present meanes, but they cannot thereby increase their future hopes, they may perhaps among men haue the praise of their munificence & liberalitie, but they shall not by God bee approued for their cost, nor when they giue vp their account be blessed in their bountie. For example, many are profusely liberal in feasting and banquetting, who because the poore are not their guests, but their kindred and rich friends, they haue their reward in this world, when they feast them againe, and their reckoning to make in the life to come, for defrauding their poore

CHAP. 4. *That almes must be giuen to the poore only.*

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poore fellow seruants, and wasting their maisters wealth in excesse and riot. Many are liberall in sending to their betters and equals rich presents; but how farre off shall they finde themselves from being blessed in their liberalitie, when in the day of their account it shall be laid to their charge, that they haue giuen more in one new-yeares-gift, to get the fauour of some flattering courtiar or false friend, then in their whole liues they haue giuen to the poore, that thereby they might be assured of the fauour of God? Many are bountifull in giuing large bribes, either to peruert iustice and iudgement, or to aduance their vnworthy selues to some worldly preferments; but as the end of their giuing is to corrupt, so their gift shall be corruption in the end, euen a canker in their flesh, and rottennesse in their bones; and as these giue not, but rather put out their monies vnto vsurie, making it serue as a small baite to catch a greater praye, so the end of their preferment shall be their ruine, and their false glory in this world, shall bring them true shame and a fearefull downefall in the world to come. Finally, there are many who spend largely on stately buildings, sumptuous furniture, and gorgious garments, giuing more for one suite of apparell, for a iewell made precious onely by such wantons estimate, for one peece of rich hangings, or a picture to adorne their wals, then euer they haue bestowed in their whole liues in relieuing the poore members of Iesus Christ. But there is no blessednesse in this

Math 25 41.

Sect. 3.

That common
vagrants and
idle persons
are not those
poore who
should be relie-
ued.

bountie, because it is spent on the world, which is most vngratefull and will neuer requite it. Yea how accursed shall they finde it at the day of iudgement, when they shall heare that fearefull sentence of death and condemnation, because they haue prodigally wasted Gods talents in such excesse and riot, and haue neglected to releiue Christ in his poore and distressed members?

So that it is not inough to be bountifull, vnlesse we chouse the poore as the obiect of our beneficence; and not all that are poore, neither is euery leaude lozell of the canting commonwealth, a fit altar whereon we may offer the sacrifice of our almesdeedes, but such as are so through necessitie and not of choise. For there are many sturdie beggers, and vagrant rogues, the blemish of our gouernment, and a burthen to the common wealth, who haue nothing in proprietic, but their licencious life and lawlesse condition; no knowne father or mother, wife or children, but a promiscuous generation, who are all of kinne, and yet know no kindred, no house or home, no law but their sensuall lust, or some wicked orders of their owne making, fit to maintaine them in their inordinate courses; men without religion, Church, baptisme, faith or God in the world, who like idle drones, feede vpon the common spoyle, and liue by the sweate of other mens browes: which kinde of poore are not to be maintained in their wicked courses, for according to the Apostles rule, *they that will not labour,*

1 Thim. 3 10. 12

must

CHAP. 4. *That almes must be giuen to the poore only.*

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must not eate; but rather the law is duely and with seueritie to be executed, which though it seeme sharpe, yet for the present it is full of mercy to the honest poore, who might be more liberally relieved, if these idle deuourers did not eate vp their portion; and would aboue all be mercifull to those miscreants, if by holesome seueritie they might be reclaimed from their wicked liues, seeing hereby they should be pulled out of the iawes of the diuell, and preserued from falling into fearefull condemnation. To which purpose Augustine saith; It is better to loue with seueritie, then to deceiue vnder shew of lenitie; and to withhold bread from the hungrie, if being sure of his victuals, he neglect iustice, then by giuing vnto him, to make him rest securely in his vnrightheousnesse.

Augustinus vincens, Dominus ista.

Or if through their inordinate liuing, and the iust hand of God lying vpon them, they are brought into extremitie and misery, so that something is to be done, if not *homini* yet *humanitati*, to the common nature of mankind, and not to the particular person; it must not bee in bountifull fulnesse to incourage him in his vnchristian courses, but onely to relieue his present necessitie. But the poore vpon whom the godly and blessed man doth exercise his beneficence, is the honest laborer and the poore housholder, who either through the greatnesse of their charge, or badnesse of their trade, crosses, losses, sicknesse, suretiship, or other casualties being brought behinde hand, are not able in the sweate of their face to earne their bread; or the blinde and maimed, the

Sect. 4.

What poore are chiefly to be relieved.

Leuit. 25. 35.

Sed. 5.

That we must
auoide negli-
gence in giuing

Psal. 41. 1.

1. Tim. 5. 16.

aged and decrepit, the weake widdowes or yong orphanes, which are either past their labour, or not come vnto it. The which is signified, by that phrase of speech which the holy Ghost vseth. *Leuit. 25. 35. If thy brother be waxen poore, and his hand faileth, or trembleth and shaketh, then thou shalt relieue him:* by which is ment the weake, sicke and impotent, who are vnable to get their owne liuing. And amongst these (if our bountie cannot extend to all) we must chuse out those who are in greatest necessitie; and especially such as are most honest and religious; *for as we must doe good vnto all: so principally vnto those who are of the household of faith.*

By all which it plainly appeareth, that it is not enough, that we be liberall and open-handed; but it is further required that wee make choise of such as God in his word hath commended vnto vs; relieuing those poore who haue his gracious passport to shew, and esteeming them as vagrants that come without it. In which our choise two extreames are to be auoided. The one is negligence and carelesnesse, whereby men giue they care not to whom; shewing therein their prodigalitie and contempt of their money, rather then their charitie towards the poore, or their loue vnto God. But this wee must carefully auoide, and no lesse studie the husbanding of the poores stocke (that those being passed by, who haue no need, there may be sufficient for the who are truly poore, as the Apostle speaketh. *1. Tim. 5. 16.*) then the well managing of our own estate;

for

for (as one saith) *pars sacrilegij est, res pauperum dare non pauperibus*, it is a kinde of sacriledge, to giue the poores portion, to those who are not poore. And euen the heathen man could tell vs, that a wise and vertuous man will not giue, but when he is moued by a right and probable reason, because a gift ill giuen is to bee reckoned among our least honest losses. And therefore he will haue his bosome easie, but not open; out of which many things goe out by direction of wisdom, but nothing falleth to the ground at vnawares. For what husbandman is so free in sowing his seede, who casteth it indifferently into all grounds, fallow and manured; yea vpon the high way and hard rockes, where it is sure to bee lost and come to nought? and why then should we shew lesse care, about this seede which is more precious, and consequently the losse greater, & the inconsiderate looting more faulty and blameworthy? For *Turpissimum genus perdendi est inconsulta donatio*, vnadvised giuing is the worst kinde of loosing, and much worse to him who bestoweth a gift ill, then it were to the other not to receiue it; for it is anothers fault if we doe not receiue, but it is ours if we make not good choise of those vnto whom we giue.

*Haebit scilicet
facilem non per-
foram. &c. Sc.
mo. de beata
vita. cap. 23.*

Seneca.

The other extreme is too much care & scrupulosity, when men of almes giuers wil be iudges, or iustices of peace, and are so busie in examining the poore about their estate and desert, that they can finde no leasure to open their purse or relieue their wants. With which practise the Apostle

*See 6.
Th. e we must
not be ouer
scrupulous in
making choise.
2. Thes. 3. 13.*

G

meeteth.

meete. 2. Thes. 3. 13. for hauing giuen charge that the idle should not bee relieved, hee addeth in the next words, *but yee brethren be not wearie of well doing.* As though hee should say; let not the disorder and inordinate courses of some, make you desist from doing the workes of mercie, and to picke a quarrell against almes-deedes, because of the vnworthinesse of those who are to receiue them. And therefore let vs take heede, that we doe not vse this practise as a vaile to hide our niggardlinesse and hardheartednesse, because we can meete with none worthy to haue thē. And to this end let vs remember that we doe not out of iustice and equitie, giue rewards to them that haue deserued them, but an almes and free gift out of mercie and pitie, to relieve the poore whom we see in necessitie; and that if wee take conuenient care, though the almes be lost in respect of the party who hath receiued them; yet not vnto vs in respect of the fruite of our beneficence. For we haue giuen it in lone vnto God and in obedience to his commandement, and he will be our paimaister in rewarding our charitie, according to that gracious promise of our Saviour. Math. 10. 41. *He that receiueth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receiue a righteous mans reward;* who also professeth, that what is done to the poore for his sake, is done vnto himselfe. There is no husbandman that will wholly refraine his sowing of seede, because there are many grounds vnfit to receiue it, but this maketh him more carefull to chuse such as are fruitfull

Math. 10. 41.

Math. 25. 40.

full and fertile; and more painefull in tilling, dunging, and manuring those that are barren, that they may bee made fruitfull; and much lesse must we take such discouragements in sowing the seedes of our beneficence, but should the same course in making them better by our benefits; and that the rather because wee are assured that though the ground where wee sow our almesdeedes doe prooue barren, yet God himselfe will returne vnto vs a fruitfull harvest.

And thus much for the object of our almes: the time of performing this duetie is daily, continually, and constantly, as our abilitie will beare, and the necessitie of the poore shall require, according to that. Eccles. 11. 6. *In the morning sow thy seede, and in the evening hold not thine hand.* And this assiduitie in the action is implied in the object. For whereas he saith, that the *godly man giueth to the poore*, he implyeth thus much, that he continueth giuing, so long as they continue in their pouertie; and that there is no end of his bountie, till he seeth an end of their wants. Neither doth hee vpbraide the poore man with remembrance of former benefits when he renueth his suites, as though it were too great boldnesse in him to craue often, and superfluous for himselfe to giue often to the same person: but remembering that his heauenly father renueth his mercies vnto him euery morning, and harkneth graciously to his suites so often as he wanteth and craueth; he imitateth his vnwearied goodnes, & giueth often to the same poore man, according

Sect. 7.
That we must
giue almes
constantly.

Eccles. 11. 6.

to his owne abilitie and the others necessitie, if he see that his wants are not caused through his idleness and negligence, but through the hand of God lying heauie vpon him. Or if God hath provided otherwise, for those whom wee haue formerly relieved, this must not put an end to our charitie and almesdeedes, seeing the godly man *giueth to the poore*, that is, so long as there are any poore, so long he giueth, his liberalitie not being appropriated vnto any persons, but extending it selfe to the same estate and condition of pouerty, when as he findeth it in new subiects. And therefore as the fountaine sending forth it streames, first filleth one emptie hole as it runneth, and then goeth into another, and neuer ceaseth till it hath filled all: so the fountaine of the righteous mans bounty neuer ceaseth to communicate the streames of his beneficence, but after he hath supplied the wants of one and many, he still seeketh after more, and neuer thinketh himselfe so rich in good workes and almesdeedes, that now he may giue ouer and spend vpon the stocke, blessing himselfe in his former bouny; but still he continueth his spirituall trade and neuer fainteth, vntill the great paimaister haue giuen him an euermlasting reward. And because God hath so ordained that there shal alway be poore (according to the saying of our Sauiour, *the poore you shall alway haue with you*) for the exercise of their faith and patience, and of rich mens bountie and obedience, that so both being approued, both may also be richly rewarded; therefore he resoluech to be constant

Math. 26. 11.

stant in his beneficence, and that in obedience to God who hath commanded it, according to that Deut. 15. 11. *The poore shall neuer cease out of the land, therefore I commaund thee saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide vnto thy brother, to thy poore, and thy needie in the land.* The which persuerance in well doing, hath the promise of reward appropriated vnto it. Gal. 6. 9. *Let vs not* (saith the Apostle) *be wearie of well doing, for in due season we shall reape if we saine not. And therefore as we haue opportunitie, let vs doe good vnto all men, especially to them that are of the houshold of faith.*

Deut. 15. 11.

Gal. 6. 9.

CHAP. 5.

What almesdeedes are, and of the true causes from which they arise.

WE haue intreated according to our order propounded, of the action and object of almesdeedes seuerally; & now it followeth that we ioine them together, *he hath giuen to the poore.* In which words he sheweth, that it is a vertue or propertie of a godly and righteous man to be liberall in almesdeedes, and in those speciall workes of mercie and beneficence whereby the poore and needy are comforted and relieued. The which dutie in this frozen age of the world is much neglected, by reason that selfeloue and couetousnesse doe so abound, and men are growne so cold and carelesse in the performance of these

Sect. 1.

That men are growne cold in these workes of mercie.

charitable actions, that their hearts seeme frozen, vnto such an icie, if not flinty hardnesse, that the deepe sighes and scalding teares of the distressed poore cannot thawe or supple them; and their hands stiffe and benumbed, being forsaken of the kindly heate of charitie and deuotion, that they cannot stretch them out to performe these Christian duties: yea this vtter neglect or slacke performance of the workes of mercy, is to be obserued (and euen with teares of blood to bee lamented) not onely among carnall worldlings, who in respect of other things haue no shew or semblance of any goodnes in them, but euen among professours of religion (by reason that couetousnesse, pride and selfe-loue doe so raigne and rule in the hearts of the most) that this Christian dutie which is so often commended vnto vs in the Scriptures, and magnified so much in the writings of antiquity, is growne almost so out of vse, that now if euer it needeth vrging.

Sec. 2.
What almes-
deedes are.

In which regard I will the more largely insist vpon it. And first I will speake of the dutie it selfe, and then of the reasons which may inforce it. The dutie it selfe is almesdeedes, or giuing to the poore; *which is a good worke, or worke of mercie, whereby a Christian out of faith, obedience, charitie and compassion, communicateth and giueth something necessary for the sustentation of life vnto the poore for their reliefe, and the supplying of their wants, to Gods glory and their mutuall good.* By which description it appeareth, that howsoeuer any man may giue gifts, yet onely the Christian and godly man can right-

rightly performe this dutie of almesdeedes. For it is a good worke, and there is none doe good, but those that are good, neither is it possible, that there should be good fruite, vnlesse it spring from a good tree. It is a sacrifice vnto God, which none can offer but those that serue him, yea a Christian sacrifice, which not any can offer in an acceptable manner, vnlesse they themselues in Christ be first accepted.

Math. 7. 18. and
12. 33.

But this will more plainly appeare by that which followeth in the description, which sheweth the true fountaine out of which almesdeedes flow, as faith, obedience, charitie, mercy; all which being proper to the godly Christian, it followeth that these workes of mercy be also peculiar vnto him. First then our almes are to arise from a liuely faith, which formalizeth all the Christians actions, and putteth the maine difference betweene their workes and the same workes done by worldlings. For first we are assured that God is good vnto vs, before we can shew any goodnesse towards our brethren; that he hath giuen vs all we haue, before we will part with any thing for his sake; that hee will giue vs all things which will make vs happy and glorious, before we will part with those things wherein men place their worldly happinesse. So that those gifts which are giuen to the poore by infidels, carnall worldlings, and men professing christianitie, but yet continuing grosely ignorant of the maine principles of religion, and in the state of infidelitie, are not such Christian almes as are

Seet. 7.
The true causes
of almesdeedes
from which
they arise.
1. Faith.

acceptable vnto God, or as will assure vs that we are godly and blessed: for to doe a worke in faith and approued in the sight of God, is not onely to be truly perswaded and assured, that the thing we doe is warranted by Gods word and allowed by him; but that we also in Christ are accepted of him, which faith being wanting it is impossible that our best actions should please God, because they are but sinne, as the Apostle telleth vs. Heb. 11.6. Rom. 14.23.

Heb. 11.6.

Rom. 14.23.

Sec. 4.

The second
cause is obedi-
ence vnto God.

Secondly, the godly mans almes is giuen in obedience to God, because hee hath commanded it. In which regard he putteth no difference betweene friend or enemy, nor respecteth his owne praise or profit, to be thereby swaied in doing these workes of mercie; but alwaies hath God before his eyes, and chiefly intendeth in his almes to doe him seruice. And therefore such almes as are giuen, without any respect to Gods commandement, out of meere humanity, and naturall pittie, or for worldly ends, as profit and vainglory, are no badges of christianity, nor any infallible properties of a blessed man.

Math. 6.2.

Sec. 5.

The third cause
is charitie. Fitt,
the loue of
God.

1. Cor. 8.4.

1. Cor. 13.3.

Thirdly, the christians almes arise from true charitie and vnfained loue; and are therefore called by the Apostle *caritas*, that is a gift giuen out of meere good will. The which is so necessary to the doing of almes, that they are of no worth, if they be done without it. For so the Apostle saith, 1. Cor. 13.3. *Though I feede the poore with all my goods, and haue no charitie, it profiteth me nothing.* Now this charitie from whence almesdeedes

spring

spring is twofold. The first is the loue of God, for whē we are perswaded, that God dearely loueth vs, and as a pledge hereof hath giuen vnto vs his deare Sonne to the death for our redemption, and with him all good things, respecting this life or the life to come; then from the fire of this diuine loue towards vs, flameth or rather sparkleth our loue towards him againe, the which we manifest by louing our neighbours for his sake, and approue both our loue and thankfulness to be hartie and sincere, by giuing vnto them somewhat out of that store wherewith God hath enriched vs, in obedience to his commandement; and that we may glorifie his name by hauing the light of our godly conuersation shining before men. Which duties of loue and Christian charitie who neglect, they shew that they are destitute of the true loue of God, as the Apostle affirmeth, *1. Iob. 3. 17. Who so hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother haue neede, and shutteth vp his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the loue of God in him?* 1. Ioh. 3. 17. Even as on the otherside, they are barren of almesdeedes though they giue neuer so much to the poore, whose liberalitie springeth not from the fountaine of Gods loue.

Now the order to be obserued in this Christian beneficence is, vpon consideration of this infinite loue of God towards vs in giuing vs his deare sonne, to haue our hearts so inflamed with loue & enlarged with thankfulnes, that we be ready to giue our selues vnto God, & to dedicate & consecrate our soules, bodies, goods, all that we

H

haue

Seet. 6.
How our almes
arise from the
loue of God in
respect of the
order.

haue to his seruice for the aduancement of his glorie; and consequently to giue liberally to the reliefe of the poore, because wee know that it is acceptable vnto him. And this the Apottle obserued in the Macedonians, who being to extend their Christian bountie to the relieuing of the poore Saints, first *gaue themselves vnto the Lord*, and then their almes to the afflicted Saints.

2. Cor. 8. 5.

1. Cor. 8. 5.

Sect. 7.

2. From our loue to our brethren.

2. Cor. 7. 5.

And as our almes must principally arise from our loue towards God; so also in the next place from our loue towards our neighbours, in which regard they are rightly called a *beneuolence*, because they proceede from meere loue and free good will. The which our loue must not onely spring from hence, that they are of the same flesh, but also because they are brethren of the same father, and members of the same body, whereof Christ Iesus is the head. Not so much because they are of the same countrey, as because they are of the same Church and communion of Saints, and of the same religion, faith and baptisme.

Sect. 8.

The fourth cause is mercy & compassion.

Lastly, the blessed mans bounty in the outward action of the hand, must spring from the inward mercie and compassion of his heart; so that it is not enough to relieue the necessities of the poore, but like a member of the same body, he must doe it with a sense & feeling of their miserie and penurie, as though he suffered together with them. And this dutie is implied by those phrases, which the Scriptures vse in exhorting to these

these workes of mercie. As Esa. 38. 10. *If thou draw out thy soule to the hungrie and satisfie the afflicted soule.* So that it is not inough to draw out our purse and relieue them, vnlesse we draw out our soules also by pittying them. And 1. Ioh. 3. 17. *Who so hath these worlds goods, and seeth his brother haue neede, and shutteth vp his bowels of compassion from him, &c.* So that it is not sufficient to haue an open liberall hand, vnlesse also we haue an open and compassionate heart. And in other places this is expressely required, as Hof. 6. 6. *I will haue mercy and not sacrifice.* And theretore if the sacrifice of our almesdeedes bee not mingled with the oyle and incense of mercy and compassion, it will not be acceptable vnto God. Thus the Apostle also requireth vs to *remember them that are in bonds as bound with them, and them that suffer aduersitie, as being our selues also of the same body.* Heb. 13. 3. An example whereof we haue in *Iob*, who was not onely bountifull in relieuing the poore, but was also in his soule grieved for them, and wept for him that was troubled. Iob 30. 15.

And this is signified by the names which in the Scriptures are given to almesdeedes. For whereas the Hebrewes haue two names to expresse them by; the one is רחם which signifieth also mercy, or those tender affections in parents, which the Græcians call *σπλάγχνον*. Implying thus much; that the inward infection of the heart is to be ioyned with the outward act of the hand. So likewise the Greeke word *ἐλεημοσύνη* deriued from *ἐλεος* signifying mercie, is indifferently

translated mercy or almesdeedes, to note vnto vs, that as they are ioyned in the word, so they must not be diuoynd in the worke.

5.8.10.
That they on-
ly are blessed
who ioine
with their
almesdeedes
mercy and
compassion.

Pro. 19. 17.
and 14. 21.

Which if we doe, we shall assuredly be those blessed men which the Psalmist describerh and not otherwise; for the blessed man of whom he speaketh, not onely *disperseth and giueth to the poore*, but is also *gracious and full of compassion*. verie 5. So not simply he that giueth, but he that giueth out of mercy and compassion, lenderh vnto the Lord. Pro. 19. 17. And he alone is blessed according to that. Pro. 14. 21. *He that hath mercy on the poore happy is he.* And therefore if we would attaine vnto blessednesse; wee must haue in giuing our almes, not onely a liberall hand, but a mercifull and pittifull heart, imitating our Sauour, *God blessed for euer*, who as he exceeded all in bounty, (*for though he were rich, yet for our sakes hee became poore, that we by his pouertie might be made rich*, as it is. 2. Cor. 8. 9.) So also in pitty & compassion. *For we haue not an high Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, but was contented in our flesh to suffer many miseries, that by his own experience, he might the rather extend vnto vs his mercie and pitty, when as hee seeth vs plunged into the like afflictions, as we may see Heb. 2. 17. 18. and 4. 15. 16. The experience whereof we haue in many places of the new testament, for when hee gaue sight to the blinde, healed the sicke and fed the hungrie, it is said that he was affected with compassion, and euen earned in his bowels in the sight and sense of their miseries and afflictions.

Heb. 2. 17. 18.
and 4. 15. 16.

afflictions, as appeareth. Math. 14. 14. 15. 32. 20. 34. and in many other the like places.

And surely then alone these workes of mercy are rightly and throughly performed, when as the outward worke proceedeth from the inward habite. Then doe we communicate to the necessities of the poore, liberally, freely, louingly, and cheerefully, when by our pity and compassion we make their case our owne, and so not only suffer with them in their wants, but also bee cheared and refreshed in their fulnesse. Then doe we touch these sores of pouertie with the softest hand, when as our selues haue a feeling of them. Then (like good Phylitians) we take most care in curing their diseases of want and penurie, when we our selues are affected, and through compassion afflicted with their griefes and paines. And then our heate of brotherly loue will be much the warmer and kindelier, when it is redoubled with some reflexion from our selues, and hath the flame of selfeloue to reenforce and strengthen it.

Sect. 11.
Ther almes-
deedes are only
rightly done
by those who
are mercifull.

But as we are to take heede of bare almes without mercy, so much more of naked mercie without almes; which is that false visard and counterfeite of mercie wherewith hypocrites disguise themselves, of whom the Apostle Iames speaketh. Chap. 2. 15. *If a brother or sister (saith hee) be naked and destitute of daily foode, and one of you say vnto him, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding you giue them not those things which are needefull for the body, what doth it profit?* For

Sect. 12.
Pittie without
almesdeedes
unprofitable.

Iam. 2. 15.

1. Ioh. 3. 18.

Theol. arab.

if we haue in our hearts the inward habit of mercy and compassion, it will surely exercise it selfe not onely by the tongue in faire words, but also by the hands in charitable workes, the which also the Apostle requireth. 1. Ioh. 3. 18. *Let vs not loue in word, neither in tongue onely, but in deede and in truth.* And this is implied by the other name **חַסְדִּים** which the Hebrewes vse to signifie almes-deedes and workes of mercie; whereby is also signified *iuslice*, which is such a grace or vertue, as resteth not onely in the affection of the heart, but proceedeth to the act and worke. So that by both these names together the nature of almes-deedes is fully expressed; the one signifying the inward habite of mercie and compassion seated in the heart, the other the outward exercise of it by the hand: whereby we are taught, that in these workes of mercy, we must ioyne the affection with the action, and the action with the affection, the one being the fountaine, the other the streame; the one the roote, the other the fruit, that floweth and springeth from it.

CHAP. 6.

That we ought to visit the poore, that we may the better performe these workes of mercy.

Seēt. 1.
That we ought
to visit the
poore.

NOW that this compassion may the more affect our hearts, and both exercise and manifest it selfe in the workes of mercie, it is fit, that not onely wee take notice of the miseries and wants

wants of the poore by the care and report of others, but also that wee often visite them, and so be eye-witnesses of their calamities. For this the Apostle *James* maketh a note and badge of that religion which is pure and vndefiled before God, not onely to relieue the poore, but *to visite the fatherlesse and widdowes in their afflictions.* Iam. 1. 27. And our Sauour numbred it among those workes of mercy, which at the day of iudgement he will reward with euerlasting blessednesse. Mat. 25. 36 & 43. 25. 36. and the neglect thereof among those sins which shall be punished with euerlasting damnation. verse 43. So that if no more could bee said to incite vs to this dutie, this alone were sufficient.

But yet consider further the vse and benefit of it, which is so great and manifold, that almost deedes cannot conueniently be done without it. For first by visiting the poore we shall be the better able to make good choise, and to discouer who are truly poore from those who are counterfeit; as also who are religious, honest, and painful in their callings, from those who are prophane wicked, and idle droanes.

Secondly, hereby wee shall the better know how to fit our almes to their necessities, both in respect of the proportion, and also the speciall kindes of their wants; and so when we not onely giue good, but fit things vnto them, the benefit hereby is much increased. If therefore the husbandman for the well sowing of his seede, which will bring but a corruptible crop, doth not hand ouer head cast it into the ground, but carefully

Iam. 1. 27.Mat. 25. 36 & 43.

Sect. 2.
Reasons which
may moue vs
to visite the
poore.
1. Reason.

Sect. 3.
2. Reason.

obserueth the seede, the soyle, the season, and all other circumstances; why should the Christian seedes man carelessly cast his seede he knoweth not where, which if it be well sowne and in fit grounds will returne vnto him a fruitfull haruest of eternall happinesse; seeing hee is not blessed who negligently giueth, but he that *guideth his affaires with discretion*? Psal. 112.5. Not hee simply that giueth almes, but he who bestoweth them with good aduice, according to that. Psal. 41. 1. *Blessed is he that considereth the poore, the Lord will deliuer him in the time of trouble.*

Psal. 112.5.

Psal. 41.

Sect. 4.
3. Reason.

Deut. 15. 4.

Thirdly, if we would thus sometime visit the poore at their houses, they would not so often haue occasion to visit vs at ours, nor be forced to straggle abroade to begge necessities; the which the Lord forbiddeth. Deut. 15. 4. and those who haue no house nor home because they will liue without a calling, like idle drones, vpon the common spoyle, would be easily discovered and discouraged, whenas hauing neither home where to bee visited, nor neighbour to visit them, they should finde little reliefe, vnlesse they earne it with the sweate of their browes.

The sight of
the poores
miseries is a
notable means
to moue com-
passion.

Fourthly, it would be a notable means to make vs more compassionate, when as we should see their small prouision, hungrie fare, thinne cloathes, and hard lodging: the children crying for hunger, and the parents out crying them because they haue no foode to giue them; some lying in straw for want of beddes, others drinking water in stead of drinke, and a third sort neere starued
with

with hunger for want of bread, or escaping that, quaking and shiuering with cold for lacke of fire. Which miseries of the poore if they moue a christiā hart to heare of the, how much more would it stir the vp to cōpasiō if they saw the, for things seene more feelingly affect vs, then those which we conceiue by report of others. And this is one cause why the wise man saith, that *it is better to* Eccles. 7. 2. *goe into the house of mourning, then into the house of feasting,* because it will worke vpon our affecti- ons, and make vs lay the afflictions of others to heart, partaking with them in their sorrowes by a sympathy and fellowfeeling: and this compa- sion working vpon our hearts, will not let our hands be idle, but will inlarge their bountie and make them more readily and liberally to contri- bute towards the reliefe of the poores necessities.

Fifthly, if we visite the poore, wee may doe them double and treble good by ioyning spiri- tuall and corporall almes both together, in- structing the ignorant, reprehending the faulty, admonishing them who erre through infirmity, counsailling them that want counsaile, and espe- cially refreshing their hearts with sweete consolations in these their wants and afflictions; to which purpose we our selues haue beene comforted by God in our crosses, according to that. 2. Cor. 1. 4. *Blessed be God, who comforteth vs in all our tribulations, that we maybe able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we our selues are comforted of God.* The which meanes of their spirituall good will at these times be most
I effectuall

See. 6.
That if ye vi-
site the poore
we may ioine
spiritual & cor-
porall almes
together.

2. Cor. 1. 4

effectuall, when as by our almes we testifie our loue; and then shall our good words finde most easie entrance into their hearts, when as our good workes haue prepared the way.

Sec. 7.
That by visit-
ing the poore
we may learne
to be thankfull.

But this dutie is so much out of vse among the rich & wealthy, through the pride, nicenesse, and vncharitablenesse of these times, that there will haply seeme to be in it some absurditie, vnlesse it be pressed with stronger arguments then those which arise from neighbourly loue. And therefore if their benefite will not moue vs to put it in practise, yet at least let loue of our selues preuaile. For by seeing the wants and miseries of our brethren, we in our owne particular may receiue much good. For we shall haue hereby iust occasiō offered of bursting forth into Gods praises, who hath dealt so bountifullly with vs, giuing vs not on ly plenty of his blessings for our owne vse which others want, but also making vs helpfull vnto our brethren. For those who abound will neuer bee so thankfull vnto God for his benefits as they ought, vnlesse they haue learned their worth out of the experience of their owne and others wants.

Sec. 8.
That by visit-
ing the poore
we may learne
temperance &
sobriety.

Againe, by looking vpon these sad spectacles of miserie and penurie, wee may learne temperance and sobriety in the vse of Gods blessings, and not to abuse them vnto superfluitie and excessse, seeing many as good as our selues in Gods true estimate doe want necessities; but to husband them in a frugall manner, that out of our abundance we may mor: liberally communicate
to

to our neighbours wants: least abusing Gods gifts he take away, and binde vs to temperance by the iron chaine of extreame necessitie, when we would not be held by the gentle bond of vertue and obedience. Finally, wee haue by these sights iust occasion giuen to prepare our selues against the day of affliction, penurie and distresse, when as we see them who are cloathed with the same flesh subiect to them, betweene whom and vs there is no difference, but that which hath beene made by Gods free grace and vnderferued mercie.

And therefore let not pride of greatnesse, depriue our soules of so much goodnesse; but when comparing the highnesse of our estate with the lownesse of this Christian duetie, wee are made loath to endure it, let vs remember that Christ hath done the like for vs; and we in token of our loue and thanketulnesse, doe it againe to our Sauiour Christ. For being in the bosome of the father in all glory and happinesse, this *light from on high visited vs*, and abating himselfe vnto the low degree of a seruant, he hath by giuing his precious blood as the price of our redemption, not *onely visited but redeemed vs his people*, according to Zachariahs song. Luk. 1. 68. 78. Yea he came among vs, and not onely saw, but also tooke vpon him our infirmities, and participated with vs in our afflictions the more to enlarge his mercie and compassion, when he was touched with the feeling of our griefes, as it is Heb. 2. 17. 4. 15. Now what doth he require for this vspeakeable loue

Sect 9.
That when we
visit the poore
we visit Christ
in them.

Luk. 1. 68. 78.

Heb. 2. 17. & 4.

15.

PGAL. 16. 3.

Math. 25. 40.

Lezech. 16. 6. 7.

and kinde visitation, but loue for loue, and that we visite him as he hath visited vs, not in his own person, for he is glorious in the highest heauens, and *our goodnesse extendeth not vnto him*; but in his poore Saints and brethren who are the members of his body; vnto whom whatseuer we doe, he accounteth as done vnto himselfe. Math. 25. 40. And therefore though wee be neuer so rich and honourable, let vs not disdaine to visite the poore seeing in them we visite Christ, who abased himselfe much more for our sakes, visiting vs when we were loathsomely defiled in our blood, and not onely sicke but starke dead, and like *Lazarus* in the graue stincking in the putrefaction of our sinnes, the vassailes of Sathan, the children of wrath, and very firebrands of hell. So that there is no poore so base and loathsome as we were; nor no worldly potentate so rich and glorious as our Sauour Christ, who was God, equall to his father. And therefore seeing hee thus abased himselfe for our sakes, let vs for his, a little stoope and humble our selues to performe all good offices to his poorest Saints; otherwise let vs be assured that if we be ashamed of him who hath advanced vs, he will be ashamed of vs; if wee scorne and disdaine him in his poorest members, he will disdaine and contemne vs at the day of his appearing.

CHAP. 7.

Of the right ends of giuing almes.

AND thus haue wee seene the fountaine from which our almes should spring ; let vs consider also in a word the maine ends where to they tend, which are the glory of God, our owne and our neighbours good. The principall end at which we must aime is Gods glorie; which as it is to be the chiefe motiue of all Christian duties, according to that, Matth. 5. 16. *Let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good workes, may glorifie your father which is in heauen*: so especially of these workes of mercy. Which motiue the Apostle vseth to stirre the Corinthians vnto a liberall contribution, not onely that heereby the wants of the Saints might be supplied, but cheifly that God might bee glorified by this bountifull distribution. For as the Lord and master of the family is much honoured, in his wise and gracious gouernment, when as the steward obeying his commandement, giueth euerie one of his fellow-seruants his allowance and portion in due season ; so is our great Lord glorified in the Church, when as the richer sort yeelding subiection vnto the Gospell of Christ, doe like faithfull stewards, thus imploie Gods wealth & riches committed vnto their dispensation, to the releefe of those in the family that stand in neede.

Scd. 1.
The principall
end is Gods
glory.

Matth. 5. 16.

2. Cor. 9. 13.

Sect. 2.
The subordinate ends of
giuing almes.

The subordinate ends at which we must aime, are the good of our brethren, who are refreshed with our almes, the adorning of our profession with these fruits of piety, the edification of others by our good example, the stopping of the mouths of our aduersaries, when as they see our loue towards God manifested in our loue towards our brethren, and haue nothing to speake against our Christian conuersation: Finally our owne present good, in respect both of temporall and spirituall benefits, and the furthering and assuring of our eternall saluation.

Sect. 3.
That if our
ends be euill,
the action is
vniprofitable.
Matth. 6. 2.
Luc. 19.

But if contrariwise the fountaine of our almes bee pride and selfe-loue, and our end bee, like the hypocrites, *to be seene of men, we haue our reward*, as our Sauour teacheth vs. Matth. 6. 2. Or if with the proud Pharisee wee giue almes, that wee may glory and boast our selues in them, euen vnto God himselfe: or with Popish Iusticiaries, doe them with an opinion of merit, or to satisfie Gods iustice for our sinnes (for so they teach, that they satisfie for sinne by thole three principall workes, almes-deedes, praier, and fasting) then in our almes-deedes, we shall sacrifice vnto God (swines flesh, and the head of a dogge, or (which is more abominable vnto him) our workes defiled with hellish pride and horrible blasphemie against his free grace, and the all sufficiency of Christs merits and satisfaction, *by whose pouertie alone we are made rich*. As it is 2. Cor. 8. 9.

2. Cor. 8. 9.

CHAP. 8.

Of the subiect matter of almes : where is shewed hat we ought to giue vnto the poor. onely that which is our owne; and what it should bee both in respect of quantitie and qualitie.

AND so I come from the causes moouing vs to giue our almes, to speake of the worke it selfe, where wee will consider the subiect matter about which it is exercised, the persons to whom it belongeth, the right manner how they are to bee bestowed, the time when wee are bound to doe them, the properties of Christian almes, wherein they differ from the almes of hypocrites and wordlings, and lastly, the diuers sorts and kindes of them. In respect of the first, wee must giue onely that which is our owne, by iust and lawfull means deriued vnto vs: as by inheritance, free gift or honest getting, by our owne painefull labours and endeauours. For almes-deedes are liberall gifts, whereby wee alienate the proper tie of the thing giuen from our selues, and not from other men, to the releefe of those who stand in neede. And to be liberall of that which is not our owne, but of right belongeth vnto others, is to take goods from the right owners, to whom God hath giuen them, and to bestow them on others at our owne pleasure, which is (as we say in the prouerbe) to cut a large shiue out of another mans loafe, to rob *Peter*, that we may pay *Paul*, and in such

SECT. 1.

That we must
giue that onely
which is our
owne.

64 *That we must giue that only which is our owne.* CHAP. 8.

Dent. 23. 18.

Es. 61. 8.

Micha. 6. 8.

Eccles. 11. 1.

Prov. 3. 9.

Es. 58. 7.

1. Cor. 16. 2.

See 1.
Ill gotten
goods must
not be giuen,
but restored to
the owners.

truth no better then plaine theft in the sight of God. Now in our Christian sacrifice of almes-deedes, wee must take heede wee offer not vnto God strange fire nor stolne oblations; for if the hire of an harlot, or price of a dogge, might not be consecrated vnto God, because they were an abomination vnto him, then neither may we offer that which we haue gotten by stealth and robbery, fraud and deceit, oppression and cruelty, which are no lesse abominable and odious. Esay 61. 8. And therefore iustice and mercy must be matched together, according to that Micha. 6. 8. *deale iustly and loue mercie*, and as mercie must lay out that which is giuen to the poore, so iustice must first bring it in. The which is signified by those phrases which the Scriptures vse in enioyning vnto vs this durie of giuing almes; as, *Cast thy bread vpon the face of the waters. And honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruit of all thine encrease. And deale thy bread to the hungry.* implying that it must be our owne and not other mens. And the Apostle requireth euerie one to lay by him in store for this vse, as God *hath prospered him*; so that nothing must be giuen to God for the benefit of the poore, but that which he hath first giuen vnto vs, in blessing our honest endeauours with fruitfull successe. So as wee may say with David, 1. Chron. 29. 14. *All things come of thee, and of thine owne wee haue giuen thee.* Whereby it appeareth that men cannot lawfully giue almes out of those goods which they haue gotten by theft and rapine, briberie and extortion, simonie and

and vsurie, dicing and vnlawfull gaming. For as the Ciuilians say well. *Bonus vsus non iustificat iniuste quæsitæ.* The good vse doth not iustifie the vniust getting of their goods. Because such goods are not their owne but other mens, which they are bound in conscience to restore to their true owners; vnlesse it be in this case, that they cannot possibly make restitution, because those whom they haue wronged are dead or vnknown vnto them; and then it being vnlawfull to keepe these goods themselves, it is the best course to giue them vnto God, the chiefe Lord of all, when the next and proper owner cannot be found; euen as by our Law stolne goods found in the ground of an inferiour Tenant, belongs to the cheife Land-Lord, when the partie appeareth not whose they are, or else to the King, when the theefe is taken with his theft about him. An example whereof we haue in *Zachew*, who hauing by his office gotten much vniustly, after his conuersion, offereth fourefold restitution vnto all whom he had wronged, and because many could not bee found to whom he should make it, hee offereth to bestow halfe of his goods to the releefe of the poore. Where by the way we may obserue that this heathenish Publican was in his worst estate to be iustified before many among vs, making profession of Christian Religion, who if they should make a foure-fold, yea, single restitution of their ill gotten goods, could not make the poore much beholding for that halfe which should remaine, seeing all would be too little to make satisfaction.

Luke 19. 8.

K

But

65 That we must giue only that which is our owne. CHAP. 8.

Sect. 3.
That it is un-
lawfull to giue
other mens
goods proued.

Esa. 61. 8.

Sect. 4.
Almes out of
goods gotten
by oppression
ynlawfull.

Quaestio. 2.
Quaestio. 2.
munus quod aliter
sum gaudio acci-
pit, aliter cum la-
chrymis amittit?

But if wee know the parties whom wee haue wronged in ill getting of our goods, we must restore them vnto them againe. For God much preferreth this iust obedience before an vnjust & wicked sacrifice: yea, whereas that is pleasing and acceptable, this his soule hateth, because in his word hee hath forbidden it. According to that Prou. 15. 8. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination vnto the Lord.* And God himself professeth, *I the Lord loue iudgement; I hate robbrie for burnt offering.* Esa. 61. 8. So the sonne of Syrach. Eccli. 34. 18. *He that sacrificeth of a thing wrongfully gotten, his offering is ridiculous, and the gifts of vnjust men are not accepted.* For he who retaineth ill gotten goods, and restoreth them not to the right owners, liueth in his sinne without repentance; and as it followeth in the next words; *The most high is not pleased with the offerings of the wicked, neither is he pacified for sinne by the multitude of sacrifices.*

But as all sacrifices and almes-deedes are vnlawfull, which are offered and giuen out of ill gotten goods; so some about others are most abominable; as first when as men giue almes out of those goods which are gotten by oppressing the poore, and that whether they wring from some poore by cruelty, deceit or violence, and giue vnto others; for as one saith, *What kinde of gift is that which one receiueth with ioy, and another loseth with teares?* or pull from the same poore by pounds at one time, and giue vnto them by pence at another. As is the practise of those cruell, yet vaine-glorious

CHAP. 8. *That we must give only that which is our owne.* 67

glorious Land-lords, who racke their poore Tenants the whole yeere, and in the twelue dayes onely keep open house, and feast them with some small part of that which is their owne. But hee that bringeth vnto God such an alms, or offering of the goods of the poore, doth as *one that killeth the sonne before the eyes of his father*; as it is Eccli. 34.

20.

But much more abominable are their almes, Seet. 5.
who spoile the Church by limonie and sacrilege, Almes giuen out of the spoiles of the Church vnlawfull.
& taking into their possession the portion of *Leui*, which is consecrated vnto God, thinke to please the Lord, & as it were, satisfie for their sin, by giuing some small almes to the poore, or keeping good hospitalitie of the spoiles of the Church. And that not onelie for the time past, but with a resolution to continue still in their sinne, paying these pittances to the poore, as the price or penaltie of their sacrilegious wickednesse: but vnto these may bee well fitted the saying of the holy Ghost. Prou. 21. 27. *The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination: How much more when he bringeth it with a wicked minde?* Prou. 21. 26.

But aboue all, the almes of our vnconscionable Seet 6.
Non-residents are most odious vnto God; who Almes giuen By Non residents vnlawfull
multiplie one liuing vpon another, and starue the soules of the people, that they may pamper and feede their own bellie. All which impietie is gilded ouer with this pretence, that they must haue wherewith to keepe good hospitalitie, and to giue vnto the poore; and what is this but to come twice or thrice a yeere to their charge to fleece

68 *That we must giue that only which is our owne.* CHAP. 8.

the sheepe, and prey vpon the flocke, and then for a day or two put them into a fat pasture, for the feeding or rather feasting of their bodies? which must bee a full recompence for the not feeding of their soules the whole yeere after.

Sect. 7.
Diuers cases
wherein it is
vnlawfull to
giue.

Secondly, whereas almes are onely to be giuen out of our owne goods, and not that which belongeth vnto others: hence wee learne that it is not lawfull for one partner to giue almes out of the common stocke without the consent of the other, vnlesse he put it on his owne account.

Thirdly, it is not lawfull for him who is indebted more then he is well able to pay, to giue alms, seeing he giueth not his own, but that which belongeth to other men.

Fourthly, It is not lawfull for a man to giue that which he hath borrowed frō another man, or that which is left in pawn with him, when the thing is to be restored in the same particular, and is not spent in the vse, as houses, lands, horses, plate, iewels, and such like; but if restitution bee onely required in the same kinde, as in things which are spent in the vse, where the propertie is alienated with the vse, as namely meat, money, corne, &c. it is lawfull to giue out of that which is borrowed, when the giuer purposeth to make satisfaction by restoring the like to the true owner.

Sect. 8.
That all the
former cases
are to be vnder-
stood with
some exceptio.

All which cases are to be vnderstood with this exception, if the poore be but in ordinarie want, and not in extreame necessitie; as when hee is in danger to bee famished or starued, or in extreame and imminent perill, to perish for want of releefe.

or

or to be vtterly ruined and ouerthrowne in his whole estate; in which cases nothing is to bee accounted proper, but all becomes commune through this vrgent and vnrresistible necessitie. Yet so as that he who giueth must purpose to the vttermost of his power to make satisfaction to the owner, for those goods which hee hath thus bestowed; seeing though it may seeme to bee a worke of mercie to giue reliefe in such extremities, yet not of iustice, if wee giue that which belongeth to other men, without any purpose of making restitution.

Mat. 12. 1. 3. 4.
Dut. 23. 24. 25.

Seet 9.
That a certaine
quantitie is not
determined.

The second point to be considered in the matter of our almes, is the quantitie or measure of them; the which is not particularly determined in the Scriptures, because there are so many circumstances which alter the case that no certaine rule could be giuen; but it is left to the discretion of the prudent Christian, to giue according to the occasion offered, more or lesse, as he thinketh good. And therefore the Apostle exhorting the Corinthians to abound in this grace, addeth that he speaketh *not this by commandement, but by occasion of the forwardnesse of others.* 2. Cor. 8. 7. 8. and afterwards. 2. Cor. 9. 7. *Euery man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him giue, not grudgingly or of necessitie; for God loueth a cheerefull giuer.* And this the nature of the worke requireth; for giuing is a free and liberall action, and therefore is to be done freely and willingly, and consequently cannot be done by all in the like proportion because their hearts are not alike enlarged

2. Cor. 8. 7. 8.
and 9. 7.

with loue and bounty.

Scd. 10.
That we must
giue liberally.

But yet this in the generall is required, that we giue our almes not with a straight and niggardly hand, but bountifully and largely; the which is implied by the metaphor of scattering or sowing seede, fitted by the Apostle to this action of giuing almes, 2. Cor. 9. 6. which is vsually done with a bountifull and full hand; as also by that phrase of opening the hād wide to the poore and needy, Deut. 15. 11. & of stretching and reaching out to the poore, which phrase *Salomon* vseth to expresse the bounty of the vertuous woman. Pr. 31. 23. And in regard hereof the act of giuing almes is by the Apostle tearmed by the name of bountie, & opposed to couetousnesse, as being contrary vnto it. 2. Cor. 9. 5. And plainly expressed, where the Apostle perswadeth to this bountie by annexing that gracious promise. 2. Cor. 9. 6. *He that soweth bountifully, shall reape bountifully;* and maketh it to be an especiall grace of the spirit to abound in these workes of mercie. v. 8. and an vndoubted signe of the sinceritie of our loue. 2. Cor. 8. 8.

1. Cor. 9. 5.

Deut. 15. 11.

Pro. 31. 20.

1. Cor. 9. 5. 8. 6.

2. Cor. 8. 8.

Scd. 11.
That in giuing
we must haue
respect to our
owne abilitie.

But yet herein respect must be had (as before I haue in part shewed) to our abilitie, keeping (as the wise man counsaileth vs) our cesterne and wels full, that our selues may drinke of them and letting the ouerplus (as it were at the waste) runne abroad to others in the streetes. Pro. 5. 16. 17. And this also the sonne of *Syrach* aduiseeth, according to thine abilitie stretch out thine hand and giue. chap. 14. 13. and giue vnto the most high according

Pro. 5. 16. 17.

Ecclesi. 14. 13.

3. **CHAP. 8.** *Of the quantity how much we must giue.*

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ding as he hath enriched thee, and as thou hast gotten, giue with a cheerefull eye. chap. 35. 10. An example of which Christian discretion wee haue in the faithfull. *Act. 11. 29. Then the Disciples euery man according to his abilitie determined to send reliefe vnto the brethren.* And this the Apostle meaneth where he requireth such an equalitie, as that *some should not be too much eased, and some too much burthened;* but that they should indifferently out of their abundance supply the wants of others, *2. Cor. 8. 13. 14.*

Notwithstanding in cases of vrgent necessitie and great extremitie, men are to straine themselves, and to racke their estates about the reach of their abilitie, to preserue their brethren from being tortured in their persons vpon the racke of necessitie: for which the Apostle magnifieth the Christian bountie of the *Macedonians*, who euen aboute their ability contributed and communicated to the relief of the poore Saints. And this our Saviour requireth, *Luk. 12. 33. Sell that you haue and giue almes.* And Iohn the Baptist. *Luk. 3. 11. He that hath two coates, let him impart vnto him that hath none, and he that hath meate let him doe likewise.* Whereby is meant that he who hath more then is sufficient for the sustentation of life, must communicate it vnto those who are in extreame necessitie, and in imminent danger to perish; as we see it practised by the faithfull in the time of persecution. *Acts 2. 45. where they that had possessions and goods, sold them, and parted them to all, as euery man had neede, otherwise vnlesse it bee in these*

and 35. 10.

Act. 11. 29.

2 Cor 8 13. 14.

Seet. 12.

That in case of extreame necessity we must straine our selves aboute our abilitie.

Luk. 12. 33.

and 3. 11.

Act. 2. 45. &c.
34. 35.

these cases of extremitie, it is lawfull to possesse not onely those things which are necessary to nature, but also to a mans state and person. For we reade that *Paul* had a spare cloake at *Troas*. 2. Tim. 4. 13. And that our Sauour himselte had two coates in his greatest persecution. Ioh. 19. 23.

2. Tim. 4. 13.

Ioh. 19. 23.

3. & 4. 13.

Of the qualitie
of our almes.

And so much for the quantitie. The third thing propounded in the matter of our almes is the qualitie of them; in which respect it is required, that wee giue to the poore things hol- some, cleanly, conuenient and comfortable for the sustentation of their liues; auoiding therein two extreames, first of those who giue vnto them such base and fluttrish foode as they would scarce offer vnto their dogges. And to this end we must remember, that wee doe not relieue contempti- ble creatures, of another kinde inferiour to our selues, but those that are of the same flesh, chil- dren of the same father, yea members of the same body and partakers in hope of the same precious promises. And which is more that in them *wee lend vnto the Lord*, who iustly scorneth our base refuse; yea relieue Iesus Christ himselte; and will we giue vnto him swill and swines meate, who hath giuen himselte vnto vs, and vouchsafeth to nourish our soules and bodies with his most pre- cious body and blood? The other extreame is to giue vnto the poore superfluous, dainties; for it is required that they be fed with necessary foode, & not pāpered wantonly with superfluities; & our Sauour when he miraculously fed the poore and hungrie people that followed him, by his sole word

CHAP. 9. *Of the persons who ought to giue almes.*

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word, did not provide for them delicates (though he might as easily haue done it as the other) but multiplied their barley loaves and fishes. Neither in truth can men thus feede some in excessse, but in the meane time others must want necessities, nor doe the poore regard dainties (vnlesse it be in their sicknesse and weakenesse) but onely desire necessities, seeing hunger doth make all fooode sauourie, and euery meale a delightfull banquet. So *Austine* saith, *vtantur diuites superfluis, dent pauperibus necessaria*, Let the rich inioy their superfluities, and let them relieue the poore with necessities: let them use those things which are bought at high rates, and giue the poore such as are good cheape. And another saith, *Communicate vnto them thy riches who feede on course fare and browne bread, and not on quails and pheasants, and who take care to kill hunger, and not to increase luxuriouse*. And againe, *giue to the poore and not the rich, giue to sustaine necessitie and not to encrease wealth.*

Aug. de verb. dom. Serm.

Hierome.

CHAP. 9.

Of the persons who ought to giue almes.

THe second generall point to bee considered are the persons who are to bee exercised in this worke of almes, and that both in respect of giuing and receiuing. Concerning the former we must consider of the persons to whom the duetie of giuing appertaineth, which admitterh a double consideration; first of estate, who are bound

sec. 1.

That the rich are bound chiefly to giue

L

to

to giue; secondly of right, who may lawfully performe this duetie. For the first, all of any estate and degree whatsoeuer are bound to giue when they meete with poorer then themselues, at sometimes, and in some cases, but principally this duetie belongeth vnto rich men; for whereas the Scriptures haue diuided all men into two sorts; the rich, whom God hath indued with possessions and worldly blessings: and the poore who are scantied of them; God requireth that those who abound should minister vnto the reliefe of those that want. So Luk. 16. 9. *Make vnto you friends of the Mammon of vnrighteousnesse.* and 1. Tim. 6. 17. 18. *Charge them that are rich in this world, that they doe good, that they bee rich in good workes, ready to distribute, willing to communicate.* Thus the Apostle would haue the *Corinthians* out of their abundance to supply the wants of the faithfull that were in pouertie. 2. Cor. 8. 14. And the Apostle *Iohn* saith, *that who so hath this worlds good, and seeth his brother hath neede, and shutteth vp the bowels of his compassion from him, how dwelleth the loue of God in him?* But for as much as men are rich or poore, not onely simply, but in relation vnto others; a man is to be esteemed rich not onely when hee aboundeth with worldly wealth, but also when he is compared with one who is much poorer; and accordingly is to communicate of that which he hath to the reliefe of those who are in greater necessitie. As for example, he who is of a meane and poore estate, must giue almes when he meeteth with those that are
in

Luk. 16. 9.

1. Tim. 6. 17. 18.

2. Cor. 8. 14.

1. Ioh. 3. 17.

Se. 2.

That none are
exempted from
this duetie.

in geater neede; and euen those who are in great neede, must communicate such as they haue vnto them, who are in extreame necessitie, & in danger presently to perish, vnlesse they haue some helpe from others. Thus he that hath but a meere competencie to supply the necessitie of nature and estate, is to giue somthing out of it to relieue those who want necessaries belonging to nature, and those who haue onely sufficient for nature, are bound to giue vnto them who are in great and present extremitie; vnlesse the like necessitie be imminent to themselues. For the rule of iustice and charitie requiring that wee should *loue our neighbours as our selues*, and *doe vnto them as we would haue them to doe vnto vs*; doth in the equitie thereof require, that wee preferre the life of our brethren before our estate, and that wee should indure small wants, to preserue them from suffering those which are great and dangerous.

So that not onely they who abound in riches, but euen those also who are of meane estate are bound to performe this Christian duetie. The which will more manifestly appeare, if we consider both the precepts and examples of holy Scriptures. The Baptist requireth that those who *haue two coates part with one*, and that *they who haue meate do likewise*: that is, if he meet with those who are in extreame necessitie, these things being not necessarie to the preseruing of his owne life and estate. And our Sauour commandeth vs to *giue almes of such things as wee haue*, bee they more or

Sect. 4.

The former point proued by testimonies.

Luk 3. 11.

Luk. 11. 41.

lesse, better or worse. Luk. 11. 41. And if we haue nothing to spare out of superfluitie, we must as (wee haue heard) sell that wee haue and giue almes, in cases of great necessitie: and if we haue nothing to sell, wee must worke with our owne hands, that we may haue to giue vnto him that needeth. Eph. 4. 28.

Eph. 4. 28.

Sect. 5.

Secondly, by
exampler.

Mark. 12. 43.

An example hereof we haue in the poore widow, which was so much commended by our Sauour Christ, for casting into the treasure her two mites which was all her substance. Mark. 12. 43. In the *Macedonians* who being themselves but poore, gaue euen aboue their ability, to the relief of those who were poorer. 2. Cor. 8. 2. In the Apostles who wanting siluer and gold, gaue such as they had to the poore cripple; restoring him by miracle to the vse of his limmes, that so by his labour he might get his owne liuing. Act. 3. 6. And in our Sauour Christ himselfe, who though he were so poore, that he liued vpon that which others out of their loue and dutie ministred vnto him, as appeareth. Luk. 8. 3. yet he himselfe gaue almes to those who were in greater want, as wee may gather. Ioh. 12. 6. 8. To which purpose one saith, that *the commandement of mercy is common vnto all offices and ages, neither is the Publican or souldiar, the husbandman or citizen, the rich or poore excepted, but all are to be admonished that they be ready to giue vnto him that needeth.*

1. Cor. 8. 2.

Act. 3. 6.

Luk. 8. 3.

Ioh. 12. 6. 8.

Ambrose.

Sect. 6.

That our small
meanes should
moues to giue

And therefore let none excuse their neglect of this religious dutie, because their meanes are small: but rather let this moue them the more care.

CHAP. 9. *Of the persons who ought to giue almes.*

carefully to exercise it, as being in respect of them an act, not onely of charitie, but also of Christian pollicie: seeing this is the meanes whereby being poore they may become richer, for *there is that scattereth, and is the more increased; and there is that spareth more then is meete, and commeth to pover-
ty.* Pro. 11. 24. And our Sauour promiseth that *if we giue, it shall be giuen to vs againe, good measure, pressed downe and shaken together, and running ouer.*

Luk. 6. 38. Now no man will in seedetime excuse himselfe for not sowing his seede, because he hath but a small quantitie to spare, aboue that which he is to spend for his sustenance that yeare; but this maketh him the rather to cast it into the ground, that being multiplyed he may haue also inough the yeare following. There is none refuse to trade because their stocke is small, but so much the more diligently they doe it, that it may be increased: and therefore seeing giuing almes is our Christian sowing and trading, let not our small meanes make vs neglect it, but to practise it with more cheerefulnesse, and so much the rather because we shall not onely reape an earthly croppe, but haue also an heauenly haruest, which will neuer faile vs.

Neither let any man say that this only belongeth vnto those who haue much to giue; but as for their almes they are so small by reason of the meanenesse of their estate, that they haue no hope they will be respected; for the Lord commandeth not giue much, but to open the hand wide, whether it be great or little, and he mea-
L 1. sureth

Se&t. 7.
That the almes
of the poore
are as accepta-
ble as of the
rich.
Deut. 15. 11.

in their bountie; whereas they who being poore, and yet giue out of their penurie, doe in their almesde:des by a liuely faith and affiance depend wholly vpon Gods promises. Now what greater encouragement can there be vnto them that haue little, to giue somewhat of their small store to those that stand in neede, seeing their worke is as much esteemed and shall bee as richly rewarded, as those who giue much out of their greater store? If a poore man had a gracious promise from his Prince, that if hee would lay out a few pence at his appointment, hee should haue a reward equall with his greatest nobles, who haue in the same respect disbursed summes of great value, how readily would he part with his small pittance for the assuring of such rich hopes? or if a merchant out of his loue and bountie, should offer a precious iewell to sale, setting his price, not according to the inestimable value of the thing sold, but according to the proportion of their abilitie who come to buie it, so that they who will giue somewhat out of little, shall as soone haue it, as those who will giue much out of their rich estates, how would poore men croud to come to such a bargaine, and with their speed preuent the wealthy in running to such a market? but here is the like case, yea so much better as heavenly, iewels and rewards exceede those which are earthly, and things permanent and euerlasting, excell in worth those which are mutable and but of momentany continuance.

CHAP. IO.

Of the persons who may lawfully giue almes.

Sect. 1.

That none
may giue but
such as are ow-
ners of the
things giuen.

AND thus wee haue spoken of the persons who are bound to giue: now wee are to speake of them who may lawfully performe this duetie. Neither may all giue almes that will, but they who are qualified and fitted for it; vnto which is required that those who giue, haue right vnto the things thus bestowed: so as they may giue their owne, & not that which belongeth vnto others: as also that they bee left by the positiue lawes of men grounded vpon christian equitie, to their libertie that they may dispose of that which is their owne, and of right belongeth vnto them, hauing age iudgement and discretion, to performe this duetie in some good manner.

Sect. 2.

That it is vn-
lawfull for ser-
uants to giue
their maisters
goods.

In the former respect it is vnlawfull for seruants to giue almes of their maisters goods, vnlesse he hath giuen them licence and libertie, if not for euery particular, yet at least by generall allowance. And yet are not seruants hands so bound from doing these workes of mercie, but that they may lawfully giue out of that which is their owne; as either that which they haue lawfully gotten by their seruice, or that which they can spare out of some allowance for their diet or apparell, which their gouernours are willing to make

make vnto them. Otherwise it is vnlawfull for seruants to giue almes, vnlesse it be in cases of extreame necessitie, in the absence of their gouernours, they hauing a purpose to make it knowne vnto them; vpon the assurance which they haue of their liking and approbation, or to restore vnto them what they haue giuen, if they finde that they mislike of it.

So also it is vnlawfull for children vnder the government of their parents or tutors, and remaining still in the familie to giue almes without the consent of their parents or gouernours, either plainly expressed by their words, or at least intimated by the continuall custome of the familie, vnlesse by their labour they earne their owne liuing, and are allowed by their parents to dispose of their owne gettings. Otherwise if they be for themselves out of the familie, or out of the familie and vnder government, but yet allowed by their gouernours some stipend for their maintenance, they may lawfully giue some almes out of their allowance, so that it bee ordered with iudgement and discretion; or if they haue no certaine stipend, yet may they giue somewhat which out of frugalitie and parcimony they haue spared euen from their owne ordinary, especially if they be truly perswaded that their parents comming to the knowledge of it would allow and approue of such disbursements.

Sect. 3.

That it is vnlawful for children to giue without consent of parents.

Sect. 4.

That it is vnlawful for those that want discretion to giue almes.

In regard of the latter, those who are not of sufficient age and discretion, though they haue right to the goods they giue, yet are restrained

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from

from bestowing of them by the equitie of law, because they want iudgement to bestow them well. In which respect it is vnlawfull for children vnder age and vnder guardians, or for fooles, mad men, and impotent persons to giue almes, because for want of discretion they may waste their state, or bestow their gifts vpon vnfit and vnworthy persons.

CHAP. II.

Whether it bee lawfull for the wife to giue almes without consent of her husband.

Sect. 1.
Certaine cases
in which it is
lawfull for the
wife to giue
almes.

BUT now in the last place it may be demaunded, whether it be lawfull for wiues to giue almes, and to performe such other workes of mercie without the consent of their husbands; for that they may giue them with their consent, either plainly expressed or secretly and implicitly intimated; there is no man maketh any question. And it is agreed on by the most that she may giue almes in diuers cases, as first if the husband be a foole or mad man, and not able to manage his estate.

Secondly, when hee is farre absent, so as his consent cannot bee asked or obtained; especially being perswaded that if her husband were present hee would approue and like of her doings.

Thirdly, when as he hath committed the ad-
mini-

ministration of his houshold expences to the discretion of his wife.

Fourthly, when hauing a certaine allowance made vnto her by her husband, she spareth somewhat out of it, being lesse liberall to her selfe, that shee may haue the more to bestow in vertuous actions.

Fifthly, when she or her friends for her, haue before marriage, ouer and aboue her dowrie reserved something to be at her disposing.

Sixthly, when she getteth some wealth by her owne proper labour, she may dispose of it to these good vses, if at least the lawes of the countrie be not against it.

Seuenthly, if the almes which shee giueth be but of small value, as bread, drinke, cast apparell, and such like.

Eightly, if the husband be exceeding couetous, so that hauing much he will part with nothing; or (as I may adde) if he be so wicked and irreligious, that though he spend much vainely, yet he will not be drawne to doe any worke of mercie; or if he be content that some almes be giuen, yet he cannot indure that any should be giuen vnto those that feare God, in respect of the hatred which he beareth vnto them.

Lastly, when it is the receiued custome of the cuntry that wiues should giue almes to the reliefe of the poore.

But howsoever almost all in the five first of these cases or cautions doe well agree, yet about the foure last there is much question. For some

Seft. 2.
Some thinke it
vnlawfull for
the wife to
giue almes.

taking it that the proprietie of the goods is wholly in the husband; doe condemne it as no better then theft in the wife, if she take vpon her to giue lesse or more by way of almes, without the consent of her husband either expressed or secretly implied. But this is an hard saying, and if it were true, I might (with better reason) say with the Disciples, in another matter; If the case bee so betweene man and wife, then it were good for woman not to marrie.

Math. 19. 10.

And therefore it shall not be amisse a little further to examine it, that as on the one side wiues may not be let loose to licentious libertie, and vnlawfull liberalitie; so on the other side they may not haue their consciences vniustly insnared and intangled, nor be restrained of their right; for he that restraineth of lawfull libertie, openeth a gappe to lawlesse licentiousnesse.

Sect. 3.
That the wif
indeauour to
perswade her
husband to
ioyne with her

First then we thus farre agree with those who oppose vs in the rest; that as God hath made them yoke-fellowes, so shee must indeauour by al meanes to worke and perswade her husband in all christian duties to draw together, that ioyning in the work they may not be separated in the reward. And to this purpose she is to vse towards him all ductie, respect, and reuerence, all louing and sweete behauiour, that gayning her husbands heart, she may moue him by louing her, to loue all goodnesse which she imbraceth and practiseth, for her sake: and also to shew such care and faithfulnessse in preserving and increasing his estate by good huswiferie and painefull indeauours

uours, that like the vertuous woman in the Pro-
uerbs, *the heart of her husband may safely trust in her,*
Pro. 31.11.

Pro. 31.11.

But what if notwithstanding all this, her hus-
band being a right *Nabal*, that is, both a churle
and foole, will neither himselfe doe any workes
of mercie, nor giue consent that shee shall doe
them? what if hee neglect almesdeedes, either
through couetousnesse and excessiue loue of his
goods, or wicked maliciousnesse and hatred of
good deedes? may not the vertuous wife in this
case doe those good workes which he neglecteth
or abhorreth? some say no, but (sauiug their bet-
ter iudgements) I hold she may, so that she care-
fully obserue these cautious. First that shee giue
with wisdom and discretion, obseruing the
things of which we haue formerly spoken; but es-
pecially her care must be that her gifts exceede
not their owne abilitie, and so impaire and impo-
uerish their estate; the which if it be vnknowne
vnto her, she must giue but sparinglie, and things
of small value; neither must shee vnder shew of
giuing almes vndoe her husband, seeing it is said
of the vertuous woman, that *she will doe him good*
and not euill all the daies of her life. Now where this
wisdom and discretion is wanting, there the wife
may not take vpon her this duetic, which is bet-
ter not done, then done foolishly and without dis-
cretion.

Sect. 4.
The state of
the question.

Cautions to be
observed in
her giuing
almes.
1. That she ob-
serue the for-
mer rules
and giue dis-
creetely.

Pro. 31.12.

Secondly, she must performe this duetic with
all meekenesse and humilitie of spirit, with all re-
uerence and due respect vnto her husbands au-

Sect. 5.
Secondly, she
must giue with
meekenesse and
reuerence to-
wards her hus-
band.

1. Pet. 3. 1.

thoritie, with acknowledgement of her subiection in all things lawfull, that hereby she may winne him by her christian cariage and conuersation to a liking and allowance of her good works, yea also (if it be possible) to the practise and imitation of them, according to that, 1. Pet. 3. 1. *See wiues be in subiection to your owne husbands, that if they obey not the word, they also may without the word be wonne by the conuersation of the wiues:* to which purpose he further perswadeth them to adorne themselues with the ornament of a meeke and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God, of great price.

Sect. 5.
Thirdly, she must not giue her husband any cause of offence.

1. Tim. 2. 10.

Thirdly, she must in the manner of doing these good workes carefully auoide the giuing vnto her husband any iust cause of offence; and not presume to vse any pride or arrogancie, stomacke and sturdinesse, insolent and contemptuous behaviour, whereby shee shall more disgrace her good deedes, then they can grace her. For the Apostle will in no case permit the *woman to usurpe authoritie ouer the man*, 1. Tim. 2. 10. vnto which fault they are most subiect when they see their husbands defects, and know that truth and right is on their side; whereby oftentimes it commeth to passe, that they spoyle a good cause by ill handling; and are more blame-worthy in their manner of doing good, then their husbands are for neglecting the good it selfe. But of this all christian women must take heede, seeing by such behaviour they doe not onely disgrace themselues and their profession, but also for want of due obedience

bedience to their husbands, doe cause the word of God (which they take into their mouthes to defend their courses) to bee blasphemed, as it is Tit. 2. 5. whereas on the other side, if they performe these christian duties with all due reuerence towards him whom God hath set ouer them, it will appeare that they doe them with a good conscience and in obedience to God; and that the feare of their husbands would restraints them, if it were not ouer-maistred with a greater feare, euen the sincere and true feare of almighty God.

TIT. 2. 5.

Lastly, she must take heede, that by reporting her owne good deedes, and her husbands backwardnesse she doe not disgrace him; but she must hide and couer his faults from al, sauing those who may helpe to better him, and pray vnto God for his amendment; for a good wife will not lay the foundation of her owne credit in the ruins of her husbands honour, but knowing that it is no small disgrace to the most proper and beautifull body, to haue a deformed and mishapen head, she will hide it vnder the vail of secrecie, or adorne and beautifie it with the most fauourable report that sinceritie and truth can giue vnto it; knowing that *a vertuous woman is a crowne to her husband, but she that maketh him ashamed is rottenesse in his bones*, as it is Pro. 12. 4. Wherein *Abigail* (though otherwise a vertuous woman) failed, excusing her husband by discouering his folly.

Sect. 7.
Fourthly, she must not disgrace her husband by publishing his faults.

Pro 12. 4.
1. lam. 25. 25.

Which cautions being obserued I thinke it lawfull for the wife to giue almes, and performe all

Sect. 8.
That it is lawfull for the wife

to giue almes
these cautions
being obseru'd.
Maine grounds
laid for the de-
termining of
the question.

all other workes of mercie, as well as the husband; the which because it is controuerted, I will in dea- uour to proue. And for the better clearing of this point, two things are to bee premitted and ex- amined, which being thoroughly knowne will giue sufficient light for the determining of this questi- on; the first is the authoritie, superioritie, and dominion of the husband ouer the wife, with all things else which they possesse; the second is the communion betweene them both in respect of goods and persons, the which are not to bee seue- red in the consideration of either of them; for the husband is so to exercise his authoritie, as that hee doe not neglect the communion which is be- tweene him and his wife, and the wife is so to in- ioy her communion, as that she doe not forget the authority of her husband.

Seet. 9.
Of the superio-
rite and autho-
ritie of the hus-
band ouer the
wife.

1. Cor. 11. 3.

Concerning the former, it is to be acknowledg- ed that the husband hath superioritie and autho- ritie ouer his wife to rule and gouerne her as her head, and that she as his inferiour is to subiect her selfe to his rule and gouernement; and it cannot be denyed but that also he hath chiefe dominion ouer all their goods, and power to rule and ma- nage the maine estate. So the Apostle saith, that *as the head of euery man is Christ, so the head of wo- man is the man.* 1. Cor. 11. 3. In regard whereof she is in many places of Scripture inioyned to be sub- iect *unto her husband in all things*; and the reason hereof is giuen, because in the creation the *man was not of the woman, but the woman of the man, nei- ther was the man created for the woman, but the wo-*

man

man for the man. 1. Cor. 11.8.9. and besides, *the man was not first deceiued, but the woman, and so was first in the transgression*, as it is 1. Tim. 2.14. and therefore it was a part of her punishment, that *her will should be to be subiect to her husband, and that he should rule ouer her.* Gen. 3.16. In regard of which superioritie it is not lawfull for the wife to take vpon her the managing of her husbands maine estate, or to dispose at her pleasure of great and weighty matters, because this is a royalty which belongeth to her superiour and head, who is the chiefe ruler and king in the little commonwealth of the familie : howsoeuer euen in these things a wife and good husband will not neglect the aduice of his discreete wife, as being his most faithfull counsaillour, and created of God purposely to this end that shee might be his helper.

But withall we must hold that the husbands gouernement and the wiues subiection must be *in the Lord*, and as *vnto the Lord*. For in this respect hath the husband authoritie ouer the wife, as bearing in himselfe the image of God; and she is to yeeld obedience vnto him, as vnto God in him, in all things which are honest, lawfull or indifferent. But if he commaundeth what God forbidderh, or forbiddeth what God commaundeth, he is not to be obeyed. As if hee shall forbid his wife to sanctifie the sabbath, to pray, heare the word, or to performe the workes of mercie which God inioyneth, because herein he beareth not the image of God, commanding as

Sec. 10.
That the husbands gouernement must be in the Lord.
Col. 3.18.
Eph. 5.22.
1. Cor. 11.7.

he commandeth, but the image of the diuell opposing against God, and crossing that which he requireth. Againe, the Lord is our supreme so- ueraigne, and the husband but subordinate vnto him as his deputie or leiuetenant, and therefore whilst he houldeth his subordination vnto Gods gouernement, the wife is to hold hers to him, because so in obeying him she obeyeth God, but if he leaue his subordination and rebell against his soueraigne, shee is not to ioyne with him in this rebellion, but leauing her subordination vnto him, as he hath left his vnto God, shee is to disobey him, that shee may yeele obedience to the chiefe commander.

Seēt. 11.
Of the com-
munion be-
tweene man
and wife.

1. Cor. 7. 4.

The second point to be considered is the communion which is between man and wife through the bond of mariage, which extendeth both vnto their persons and goods: the communion of persons is so neere and indissoluable, that *they are no more two, but one flesh*, in which regard they haue no more proprietie in themselves, nor absolute power of disposing their owne bodies, but either in other; according to that, 1. Cor. 7. 4. *The wife hath not power ouer her owne body, but the husband, and likewise also the husband, hath not power ouer his owne body; but the wife.* So also there is such communion in their goods, that there is no absolute proprietie in either of them, but it resteth in them both; neither haue these words *mine* and *thine* any place betweene them, seeing they are but one flesh, and one body, whereof the husband is the head. And howsoever married persons, speaking of

of that which they possesse vnto others, may say that this is mine to noie proprietie, yet when they haue relation to one another, they imply this community, by saying these goods are ours; So *Jacobs* wiues speaking of their goods, say that *all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours*, though no part of it came by their dowry, but through the blessing of God vpon their husbands labours, onely it was theirs through the communion of marriage. And this communion both of persons and goods is signified, yea plaine-ly expressed in our forme of marriage, both by the words and actions there vsed; the communion of persons by ioyning of hands, and by those words, *with my body I thee worship*, by which hee professeth that he doth her honour in voucha-sing vnto her the communion of his body, for it is the honour of a woman to haue an head and husband; the communion of goods, by giuing vnto her a ring, and (as it was the practise hereto-fore) money or gold with it, as an earnest of all the rest, and by those plaine words, *with all my worldly goods I thee endow*.

Gen. 31. 16.

Yea will some say but this communion extendeth vnto vse onely. I answer it is true, for what can be more required then vse, where there is no proprietie, but that which is in them both? yea but (say they) the proprietie is in the husband, and for the common vse which the wife hath in her husbands goods, it onely extendeth to her meate, drinke, apparell, and such necessities as are fit for the maintenance of her person. The former hath some colour, because the husband

Sect. 12.
How farre the
communion in
goods extendeth.

An obiection
that the hus-
band may dis-
pose of all at
his pleasure,
answered.

hath right to alienate and sell house and land, yea to giue all away if hee please without the wiues consent, vnlesse it be her ioynter or dowre. I answer that they may doe all this wisely and discreetly for their owne good and of their wiues and children, by that authoritie and superioritie which they haue ouer their wiues and goods, though they haue no proprietie in them more then they, because the action best proceedeth from the predominant cause and chiefe agent; but if it be to the wiues hurt and preiudice, they abuse their authoritie, and sinne against their spouse by infringing the communion; and as he who with riot, wastfulnesse, excesse and ill husbandrie consumeth and mispendeth his estate, is a theefe to himselfe, so also to his wife in that hee robbeth her of her right which by vertue of the communion of marriage belongeth to her. And therefore we reade that when *Ananias* (though he were but an hypocrite) sold his possession to relieue the necessitie of the Church, yet hee did not doe it without his wiues consent, but they ioynd both together in the sale, according to the custome of those times, *Act. 5. 1.* Now if any will say that the husband hath more absolute right among vs to dispose of al his goods and possessions at his owne pleasure: to this I answer, that he hath it not by the law of God, but by the positieue lawes of men, and I dispute not what a man may doe, *in foro iudiciali*, in the courts of men, but what he is bound to doe *in foro conscientia*, in the court of conscience.

Act. 5. 1.

Secondly,

Secondly, the proprietie of the husband hath some shew of reason seeing hee hath power by will to dispose of his goods at his owne pleasure. I answer that though he may make such a will in his life, yet it is not to take effect till after his death, when the band of marriage is dissolued, and the communion between them ceaseth. Neither is it then lawfull to giue away all from his wife, but he is bound to leaue vnto her a good part and share, and a part also vnto his children, the which generall rule of equitie, is by our law wisely and equally determined to be a third part to either of them, another third onely being left to his disposing: wherein they are like vnto partners who whilest they continue together haue equall right to the whole estate, but take euery one his share when their partnership being dissolued they goe from one another.

Sect. 13.
Another objection answered.

To the other part of the obiection which restraineth the vse onely vnto the meate, drinke, apparell and such other corporall necessities. I answer, that it becometh not a christian; for haue they power by vertue of this communion to dispose of their goods for all vses, sauing doing good? may they imploy them at their pleasure for the good of their bodies, and may no part be allowed vnto them to dispose of for the good of their soules? may they haue enough to pamper their bellies and adorne their backs, and to bestow vpon all vses, which pride, pleasure and vanitie will call necessary, and shall they haue no power to lay vp treasures in heauen, nor

Sect. 14.
That the wife hath communion in goods to all good vses

to send some small part of their wealth by the hands of the poore to those eternall mansions, if their husbands do not giue allowance, who care not to haue any store laid vp in that countrey, because they meane neuer to trauaile thither? Let diuines then be ashamed of making such a limitation and restraint, which so much tendeth to Gods dishonour in the neglect of charitable and christian duties.

Sect. 17.
The conclusio
of the former
point.

2 King. 4. 10.

Let this then be the conclusion of this point, that the chiefe authoritie ouer the person of the wife and their common estate is in the husband, and that the wife hath also communion with him in all he hath both in respect of proprietie and vse taking it in the largest signification for all imployments which may bring good either to her soule or body; the which both of them are bound to further in one another by all good meanes, it being the most excellent and common dutie of marriage to aduance their mutuall good. And therefore the good woman of whom wee reade. 2. King. 4. 10. ioyneth both these together, and maketh suite vnto her husband in behalfe of the Prophet, to acknowledge his superior authoritie; but yet attributeth a part of the action to be done vnto her selfe, seeing it was to bee performed by those goods, in which she had communion with him; and this is the cause why shee saith not, *I will make him a chamber*, to infringe her husbands authoritie, nor *doe you make him a chamber*, to impaire her owne right, but, *let vs I pray thee make him a chamber*. Neither let any man here say

say, that this maketh against mee, because shee would not doe it of her selfe without her husbands consent; seeing no man euer dreamed that the wife should take vpon her so to doe, if shee can possibly by any good meanes obtaine her husbands allowance.

And thus hauing vntied the hardest knots in this controuersie, and remoued the maine blocks which did lie in the way; the reasons which may further be produced for the clearing of this point will finde a faire and easie entrance. And first, all good actions and workes of mercie are charged as well vpon the wife as the husband, and where any commaundement requiring them is propounded, it extendeth as well to the woman as the man: as namely relieuing the poore, feeding the hungrie, visiting the sicke, cloathing the naked, & such like, and therefore the wife is no lesse bound to doe them than the husband, and liable to the same punishment if she doe neglect them. yea not onely these good workes are generally comanded to all mankind but especially to this sexe, as appeareth. 1. Tim. 2. 10. where the Apostle forbiddeth women *brayded hayre, gold, pearle and costly array*, and requireth that instead of them they should *(as becommeth women professing godlinesse) adorne themselves with good works*. Now if any say that they must doe workes of mercie out of that which is their owne, and not out of their husbands goods, to this I haue answered, that by the vertue of the communion of marriage, they haue to all good purposes the lawfull vse of that

Seet 16.
The first reason. That all good workes are inioyned vnto the wife as well as vnto the husband.

1. Tim. 2. 10.

that which is in their possession. And if they affirme that shee is inferiour to her husband and therefore must not doe any of these workes without his consent : I answer, that as shee is inferiour to her husband, so both he and she to the supreme soueraigne, and therefore though shee is to shew subiection and yeeld obedience to her husband in all things lawfull and indifferent, yet not where God commandeth the contrary, seeing here the Apostles rule taketh place, that *it is better to obey God then man.* For he is the chiefe Lord of all, and the husband but a steward and inferiour officer vnder him, to dispose of his goods as he commaundeth, and to giue vnto his fellow-seruants their portion which belongeth vnto them : now if he neglect this duetie and conuert all to his owne vse like a miser, or mispend his maisters goods in excesse and riot, the wife who is ioyned in commission with him as an inferiour officer is not to ioyne with him in these courses and so make her selfe partaker of his sinne and punishment, but to imploy that which is vnder her hand in her maisters seruice, and to performethose good duties to her fellow-seruants which he neglecteth.

3rd. 17.
An objection
answered.

Num. 30.

Yea but the husband hath such authority ouer his wife, that though, in the time of the law she should make a vow vnto God, to consecrate any thing vnto his seruice, it was in his power to disanull and make it voide. To which I answer that vowes were either of things absolutely commanded, or of things indifferent, either in their owne

owne nature, or in respect of circumstances; the former voves are nothing else, but the renewing of the generall vow which we made vnto God in baptisme, as the Iewes in the sacrament of circumcision, and such no power of man can make voide and disanull. But these are improperly called voves, being nothing else but duties which we are absolutely bound to performe, & are not at all left at our choyse. But the other sort of voves which are of things indifferent, at the pleasure of the wife, may be made voide by the authoritie of the husband; and of these that place in the law is to be vnderstood. For example if the wife vow vnto God, that she wil bestow some part of her goods in doing works of mercy, the Husbands authoritie cannot make it voide, because God himselfe hath required it; but if she vow that she will giue such and so great a summe to these vses, the husband by his authority may disanull it, whenas it is more then his estate will well beare, or that it is otherwise vnfit in respect of other circumstances, being wisely and religiously considered.

The second reason is that almes ~~deeds~~ and the workes of mercie are no lesse commended in the Scriptures in the wife then in the husband; for as it is heere made a signe or propertie of a blessed man, that hee disperseth and giueth to the poore; so elsewhere of a vertuous and good woman. As *Pro. 31. 20. She stretcheth out her hand to the poore. yea she reacheth out her hand to the needie,* by which phrascs of *stretching* and *reaching out the*
hand

Se^t. 18.
That workes of
mercy are com-
mended in the
wife as well as
in the husband.

Pro. 31. 20.

hand is signified, not onely that she giueth somewhat, but liberally, and to the vttermost of her abilitie. And not without good cause is it made a note of a gracious wife, because almes deeds are ordinarily done out of household store and provision, the administration and disposing wherof doth more properly and immediately belong to the woman then to the man, as we may see by the current of that whole chapter. So the Apostle would haue the younger women to marry, beare children, and guide the house, 1. Tim. 5. 14. The which when the Husband alloweth, hee giueth honour to his wife; as the Apostle requireth 1. Pet. 3. 7. and contrariwise disgraceth her when hee turneth her out of this her office & viceregency. For as the man is the principall getter of the estate, and the bringer of it in, so the wife administration of it for the good of the husband and familie, belongeth vnto the woman; not onely by speciall commission from him for euery action and imployment, but as she is a Wife by vertue of her calling, place and office; if at least she be not limited and restrained for her misgouernment and want of discretion in abusing and mispending their estate, by the superiour authority of her husband. And as in the common-wealth, the King, though he hath supream authority ouer all, yet doth not take vpon him to administer all the affaires of the kingdome, but hath vnder him many inferiour officers, who by vertue of their place and office mannage great and weighty affaires without any speciall commission for particular

1 Pet. 3. 7.

particular actions; and although hee hath euer in his hand a superiour power ouer them, to call them to account, and to turne them out of their offices, when they mis-behaue themselues, and abuse his name and authoritie; yet so long as they holde their place and office, they may iustly execute the affaires and duties that belong vnto it: so is it also in the little common-wealth of the house and family; for when the husband hath chosen a wife, the administration of household affaires belongeth vnto her by vertue of her place and calling, vnlesse she be suspended from this power and liberty, for her vniust and vndiscreete abusing of it; and for the husband to intermeddle more then necessity requireth with her domesticall businessse, is as if a King would be Chancelour, Treasurer, Cheife Iustice and all himselfe, though hee had officers appoynted to all these places, which were but to ouerburthen himselfe and abase his Royall condition, and also to wrong those who are deputed to these offices, by distrusting causelessly their fidelitie and sufficiency.

Thirdly, God the first Instituter of marriage, gaue the wife vnto the husband, to bee, not his seruant, but his helper, counsellor and comforter. The which duties she is bound to performe, not onely in respect of temporall affaires, but also of those things which appertaine to godlinesse and euerlasting happinesse; and therefore if hee neglect religious and charitable duties, shee is not onely bound to moue and perswade him vnto them, but also, if hee still neglect them, to doe

Sect. 19.

3. Reason because the wife is appointed by God to be an helper in all good things. Gen: 2.18.

Exod: 4. 25.

them her selfe for him, lest the sinne and punishment lie not onely vpon him, but also vpon her and the whole familie. For if *Zeppora*, performing a duty which belonged vnto her husband, and not vnto her, auerted Gods iudgements from him, the inflicting whereof was begun for his neglect; how much more may a good and vertuous wife doe the like, when her husband neglecteth these common duties which belong indifferently to them both?

Sect. 20.
4. Reason. That the wife should be in a worse condition than a seruant if shee might not giue almes.

Fourthly, if a wife had no libertie to doe these almes-deedes and workes of mercy without speciall commission from her husband, then were she in as bad an estate as the basest seruant, seeing they also may giue almes and doe these workes when they haue leaue from their masters. Yea in truth the wiues seruitude should be farre worse than of the meanest seruant; for it is the most grieuous bondage, to bee bound from doing good, and restrayned from expressing our good will by our workes and actions; now the poorest seruants may according to their smal estate, giue almes and doe good, out of that which is their owne and earned by their painfull labours; and so though they giue little, yet giuing according to their abilitie, they may (like the poore widdow that cast in her mites) be rich in good works, and richly rewarded in the life to come; whereas the wife though shee haue neuer so much vnder her hand, yet may giue nothing of it, nor haue any libertie without licence, to expresse the bounty of her heart in the outward action; or if shee doe
(accor-

(according to their conceipt) shee doth not ther-
in a worke of mercy, but sinneth, stealeth, and
thereby maketh her-selfe lyable to Gods wrath
and punishment. Neither will it helpe them to
say that her estate is better, because hauing more
interest in her husbands loue shee may obtaine
his consent, and so giue more liberally then a ser-
nant, seeing this doth not make her bondage lesse
in it owne nature, but only lighter through her
husbands loue, neither is her chaine taken from
her, but whereas before shee was (as is were)
bound with it to a poste, now shee walketh about
with it in her husbands hand.

Fiftly, I would faine know if the sentence of
euerlasting happineffe will not equally and alike
be pronounced at the latter day to the wiues as
well as to the husbands, for their alike doing
these workes of mercie; but according to their
opinion the Iudge should not say to many wiues,
I was hungry and yee fed mee, I was thirstie and
you gaue me drinke; but you would haue done
these things if your husbands would haue suffred
you, but yet neglected mee in my members
though I was in great extremitie, because you
had not their consent.

Sixtly, the power of the wife to giue almes ap-
peareth clearly by the examples of holy wo-
men in the scriptures; as of *Abigail* who (not only
without the knowledge, but contrarie to the
minde of her husband *Naball*, plainly expressed
by his absolute refusall) gaue a great present to
Dauid, and his followers for their reliefe. Vnto

Sec. 21.
Reason. That
the last sen-
tence shall be
pronounced to
wiues as well
as husbands.

Matth. 25. 34.

Sec. 22.
The 6. reason
grounded on
examples, as
1. of *Abigail*,
1 Sam. 25.

which it is answered, that *Abigails* example is no rule for other women; for then by the same reason it should be lawfull to call their husbands fooles as she did. But to this I reply, that we must distinguish betweene the infirmities shewed in the action, and the action it selfe; the infirmities and imperfections no man alloweth, but for the action it selfe it was good, and shee pronounced by holy *Dauid* blessed for it; yea he blesteth God as being the chiefe author who stirred her vp to the doing of this charitable action, v 32. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who hath sent thee to meete mee this day.* Secondly, it is said that *Abigail* was a wise and vertuous woman, and therefore might the better do it. And who giueth libertie vnto any other but vnto those only, who are able to performe these actions vertuously and with some discretion? Thirdly, it is objected that *Naball* was a churle and a foole, and therefore it was lawfull for his wife who was wiser then he to dispose of some part of his great estate. To which I reply that I giue no authoritie to wiues to giue against their husbands will, vnlesse they be such *Naballs* and wicked churles, who by no perswasions will be drawne to the doing of any good. Yea but he must be not only a churle, but also a foole such as *Naball* was. To which I answer, that who so doth well consider *Naballs* answer to *Dauids* messengers, and compareth it with *Dauids* present estate, who with his company liued, in the fight of carnall men, like fugitiues and out-lawes; he will finde more wickednesse in it, then want of worldly

worldly wit. Wickednes I say, because hee did not (like his wife) beleue Gods promises made to *Dauid* concerning his establishment in the kingdome, when as he saw him in this afflicted estate. Secondly, because therein hee sheweth his churlishnes & auerfenes to any good, & particularly to releue the distressed seruants of God, though he had abundance in his hands to bestow superfluously in riotous feasting those he fauoured. Thirdly, that he was more wicked then witlesse, it appeareth by his seruants words to *Abigail*, v. 17. who said that he was *such a wicked person or sonne of Beliall that no man durst speake to him*, whereas folly in the master worketh rather contempt than feare in the hearts of seruants; and also by *Abigail* her words to *Dauid*, who ioyning his wickednes with his folly, sheweth that his folly chiefly consisted in his wickednesse, & though he might haue worldly wit, yet he was destitute of true spirituall wisdom, which chiefly consisteth in godlinesse and in the feare of the Lord. Neither do we leaue libertie to wiues to perform these workes of mercy without the allowance of their husbands, vnles they be such fooles, that is, such carnall worldlings as will neither themselues doe good, nor by their good wills suffer others; for though these be not fooles and mad-men, because they haue the vse of reason, yet are they foolish and mad in respect of christianitie, seeing their reason is quite opposite and contrary to religion.

Another example hereof wee haue in those
godly

Señ. 23.

The examples
viced which
the Euangelist
mentioneth.
Luk. 8. 3.

godly women commended by *S. Luke*, namely *Ioanna the wife of Chuza Herods steward, Susanna, and many others*, who of their substance ministred vnto our Sauour Christ. For whereas some answer that it is likely that they did it with the allowance of their husbands, this conceit hath little ground; for it is not probable that a man so highly in fauour with *Herod*, would shew such loue to our Sauour, whom his master contemned or rather hated. And secondly, if this good worke had beene done by the consent of their husbands, it is likely that the Euangelist would haue ascribed the action to them as the chiefe agents, and not to their wiues only, giuing them alone the praise of this charitable bounty.

Sect. 24.
Last reason ta-
ken from the
custome of the
Cuntry.

The last reason to proue the lawfulness of these charitable workes and almes-deeds done by wise and religious wiues, is the custome of our cuntry, which ordinarily authorizeth them to doe these workes, if their power be not iustly restrained by their husbands for their abusing of it. In regard wherof there is no reason that any should insnare and trouble the consciences of any vertuous wiues by perswading them that these workes of mercy are not done lawfully by them, vnlesse they haue speciall commission from their husbands; seeing this christian custome sufficiently authorizeth them, if they haue no lawfull restraint by their superiour authoritie.

Sect. 25.
Their obiection
answered who
say that this li-
berty granted
to wiues is
dangerous.

Yea but though this doctrine be true, yet it is dangerous to be published, seeing many vndiscreete weomen will abuse it, to the vndoing of their

their husbands and the ruining of their estates. To which I answere that it is but a carnall conceipt to dreame, that any euill can come by the discouerie of a religious truth, or though there should, yet *fiat iustitia & ruat cælum*, let truth and right be maintained though the inconueniences which follow it be neuer so great. What if some abuse their swordes, must therefore all men be disarmed of their weapons? What though some abuse their power and authoritie, must therefore all bee disabled deposed from their gouernment? what if the Gospell it selfe which in it owne nature is the sauour of life vnto life, becometh to some through their corruption the sauour of death vnto death, must therefore the mouthes of Gods Ministers be stopped, and the preaching of the Gospell be interdicted? and what though Christian libertie and right being knowne vnto wiues, some abuse it through their impietie and indiscretion, let the sinne bee vpon their heades who abuse the truth of God, but let not for this those which are discreet and vertuous be kept ignorant of their dutie, and haue their consciences insnared and burthened with that which is not sinfull, but in bare conceit, yea in truth with that which is honest, charitable and commendable; seeing when they know their Christian libertie, they will so much the more conlacionably and carefully, circumspectly and discreetly vse it, and not rashly rush beyond their boundes. And as for others what great danger is there, lest by vndiscreet giuing they should hurt and ruine their

husbands estates ; seeing they haue alwaies a superiour authoritie in their hand to reſtraine their exceſſiue and vnlawfull liberalitie ? or if any at all, yet how farre leſſe is the perill by teaching their libertie in the uſe of their goods for the doing of the workes of mercy, then for their diet and apparell? ſeeing whereas one man receiueth hurt in his eſtate by his wiues too much bountie toward the poore, and ſuch like workes of mercie, many hundreds are impouerished by their too much daintineſſe and curioſity in furniſhing their table, and their exceſſiue coſtlineſſe and brauery of apparell. Howſoeuer it is, yet I am ſure no fooliſh wiues can iuſtly beare themſelues out by any thing before ſpoken in their vndiſcreet lauiſhneſſe: nor that any husbands who are vertuous and religious, wiſe and louing to their ſpouſes, haue any iuſt cauſe of complaining, ſeeing ſuch will goe with them in all good actions, yea alſo, before them in the light, of an holy & Chriſtian example and in that regard their wiues may not goe without them, but take their counſell in all workes of Chriſtian charity. Neither in truth haue any the leaſt colour to take exceptions, but vncharitable worldlings and churliſh Nabals, to whoſe wiues alone this libertie is giuen of doing workes of mercy without their allowance, becauſe their hearts are ſo wicked and wretched, that they will not bee perſwaded to ioyne with them in theſe charitabie actions.

CHAP. 12.

*Of the persons vnto whom almes are to be giuen : and
in what order one is to be preferred before another.*

AND thus wee haue shewed who are to giue almes. In the next place wee are to consider to whom they are to bee giuen ; the which hath in part been touched when I spoke of the obie& of our liberality; and now is more fully to bee handled. First then, howsoever wee owe loue vnto all men, and in this loue wee may, yea, ought to doe them all good : yea, howsoever we may giue gifts and rewards to whom we will, either to shew our loue, or to encourage men in their well deseruing ; yet almesdeedes are to bee extended onely to the poore and needy, for therefore are they called *Eleemosynæ*, because they are to bee exercised towards those whose penurious and miserable estate requireth & deserueth mercy & compassion. So the Lord requireth Deu. 15. 11. *Thou shalt open thine hand wide to thy poore, & to thy needy of thy land.* Wherby thus much is signified, that wee should giue not onely vnto those who are generally and absolutely poore, but also to them who though they haue a good estate, yet for the present, by some sudden accident do want and stand in neede of our releefe ; as when a man otherwise of good meanes, is forced to aske an almes, being brought into present necessitie,

Sect. 1.
That almes
are to be giuen
onely to the
poore and
needie.

Deut. 15. 11.

through perlecution, shipwracke, fire, robberie, and fuch like vnlooked for and v unexpected accidents.

And therefore the Seriptures enioyning this dutie, expresse the person, who ought to bee releued rather by the name of needy, then by the name of poore. So the 1. Ioh. 3. 17. *Whoso b. sh this worlds goods, and seeth his brother hath neede;* and Ephes. 4. 28. the Apostle enioyneth men to labour that they may haue to giue to him that needeth. And 2. Cor. 8. 14. he would haue an entercourse betweene Christians in doing these works of mercie with equality, according to present occasions, that those who now releue may bee releued, and that those who are now releued may releue if God make a change in their estates. *Thus now at this time* (saith he) *your abundance may bee a supplie for their want, that their abundance also may be a supplie for your want, that there may be equalitie.* To which purpose also Iohn the Baptist requireth him that *hath two coats to impart vnto him that hath none, and him that hath meat to doe likewise.*

Now these poore and needie are sometimes distinguished into manie kindes, so our Sauour nameth sixe, Matth. 25. 35. the hungrie, thirstie, stranger or harborlesse, the naked, sicke and poore prisoner. And out of the Prophet *Esay*, wee may adde the oppressed and exiled. *Esa. 58. 6. 7.* Especially those who suffer these miseries for their constant confession of the truth. To which out of other places wee may adioynethose who are indebted about their meanes, the lame, blinde and maimed

the Seriptures
enioyning this
dutie, expresse
the person, who
ought to bee
releued rather
by the name of
needy, then by
the name of
poore.

1. Ioh. 3. 17.

Ephes. 4. 28.

2. Cor. 8. 14.

Luc. 3. 11.

Seft. 3.
The diuers
kindes of poore.

Matth. 25. 35.

Esay 58. 6. 7.
Nehem. 5. 11.
Luc. 14. 12.

maimed, the aged and decrepite, the poore widow and distressed orphanes; And vnto these we may adde all others, who being in any such like distresse doe neede our helpe and comfort.

1. Tim. 1. 27.

But because mens liberalitie being stinted within the limits of their estates, cannot extend vnto all poore, it will not bee amisse to consider who, in bestowing our almes are to be preferred before other, and to haue the priuiledge and place about the rest. And first wee are to know that principally respect is to bee had to the state and condition of the parties, without any difference of persons, strangers or acquaintance, enemies or friends. For those who are in extreame necessitie, and thereby likely to perish, are first to be releued, though they be our enemies, before our kindred and friends, though otherwise in great want; and so likewise those who are in great need; before those whose wants are common and ordinarie. But if our state be so small, that wee are not able to releuee all that craue our helpe, being in the same degree of pouerty, then we may preferre our kinred and friends, and especially those who are godly and vertuous. Wherein also wee are to haue no small respect to those who by Gods providence are first cast vpon vs, seeing thereby, being first offred vnto vs, they are after a sort by God himselfe preferred before others. And this our Sauour signifieth in the Parable of the Samaritane, Luc. 10. 33. who finding, as hee iourneyed, the wounded man, tooke compassion on him, and releued him.

Sect. 4.
Of the order which wee ought to observe in our giuing almes, and first we are to respect men according to their neede and misery.

*Matth. 5. 42.
Rom. 1. 23.
Luk. 6. 30.*

Sect. 5.
The Church
and Common-
wealth are to
be respected in
the first place.

But if there bee an equalitie of estate, and the want and necessity be alike, then is there to be an orderly proceeding of our almes, in respect of persons, and those to bee first releued to whom wee are most bound. As first the whole Church and common-wealth is to bee preferred before a mans owne person, and if there be such a necessity, we are rather to perish our selues, then to suffer them to perish, for it is better for one member to bee cut off, then that the whole body should be destroyed : and this made the Disciples in the Primitiue Church to sell all they had for the reliefe of the common necessitie. And in this respect the King and such publike persons, in whose safetie the welfare of the Church and Common-wealth consisteth, are also to be preferred before our selues, so that if we and they be in equall extremitie, we must neglect our owne persons for their good and preservation.

Sect. 6.
In the second
place we must
regard our
selues, & then
our wiues.

*Tho. Aquin in
1. 2. q. 11. 20.
Art. 11. 12.
Azo 4. instit.
part. 2. lib. 12.
cap. 13.*

Gen. 2.
Epit. 1. 38.

In the next place our care must extend to provide necessities for the releuing of our owne wants, for charitie and mercie beginne at home, and to whom can he bee pittifull and compassionate, that is cruell to his owne bowels ? and then vnto our second selues, our wiues ; for whereas the schoole-men in cases of extreame necessitie, would haue our parents preferred before our wiues, I take it to be erroneous and vniust ; for in the institution of marriage, man is to leaue father and mother and to adhere to his wife, so that they are no more two, but one flesh. And the Apostle saith, that a man ought to loue his wife as himselfe,

selfe, and therefore better then his parents. For where as they except that the Apostle saith, a man must loue his wife as his owne body, and that because wee ought to loue our neighbours better then our bodies, and our parents best of all our neighbours, and therefore also better then our wiues: it is most friuolous, for by the same reason a man should loue his other neighbours also better then his wife (which I confesse to bee the popish charity) but the Apostle by an vsuall Synecdoche there putteth the body for the whole man, as hee plainly explicateth himselfe, vers. 33. where he saith, that euery man must loue his wife euen as himselfe, and therefore the reason grounded on this place standeth strong.

Next vnto the wife, and euen before our children, parents are to be releued in their necessity; for though in the order of charity a man loueth his owne children better then father or mother, in which regard we vsually say, that loue descendeth rather then ascendeth; and though, as some adde, the childe is neerer vnto a man then his parents, because hee is of his owne substance (howsoever heerein for my part I see no difference, vnllesse it bee on the parents side, for why am I not bound in neerer bonds of nature vnto them from whom I had my substance and being, then vnto those who haue from me their substance and being?) yet seeing almes/deeds and releefe in their nature are benefits and retribution, which doe cheifely respect debt and dutie, and seeing wee owe more debt and duty vnto parents, in respect

Sect 7.

Next vnto our
wiues, parents
are to be re-
leued.

of our being, birth and breeding then vnto our children, therefore in cases of extremitie wee are to preferre in ministring releife, our father or mother before them, when wee are so straitened in our meanes that we haue not sufficient to giue vnto both. And this is a part of that honor which children owe vnto parents, the which our sauour highly esteemeth that hee farre preferreth the releuiing of our Parents before freewill offerings and oblations which wee giue and dedicate to Gods seruice. And therefore condemneth the Scribes and Pharises who excused children for neglecting this dutie in releuiing their old, impotent and decayed parents, vnder colour of bringing these gifts into the treasure, which should haue been bestowed on their maintenance. Mar.

Mar 7. 11. 12.

7. 11. 12.

Sect. 8.

Next vnto our
Parents, our
children are to
be cared for.

After parents our next care ought to be for our children, of which I shall neede to say little because nature it selfe doth teach so much, and vnto them I adioyne the whole familie who are vnder the charge of the Gouvernours, and therefore to be provided for by them as well, in their place & kinde, as those that come out of their own loines. And though a mans kindred and friends may be neerer to him then many vnder his rooffe, both in respect of blood and also louing affection; yet when he hath by admitting them into his family taken charge of them, he is to provide for them before the other. According to that 1. Tim. 5. 8. *If any provide not for his owne and specially for those of his owne house, he hath denied the faith and is worse then*

then an infidell.

So that all these are in their order to be releiued before all others by the expresse commandement of almighty God, euen before those who are vertuous and religious, being not so neere vnto vs in these bondes of nature. But next as (I take it) our spirituall kindred is to take place, and in our works of mercy to be preferred before those who are onely a kinne vnto vs in the flesh. I say onely, because if our kindred in the flesh be also vertuous & religious, they are to be preferred before the other; yea though they haue not attained vnto that measure and degree of grace and godlinesse, so that it be in them in substance and truth, and not onely in a generall, bare, and vnfruitfull profession; as it is in many amongst vs, who though they are content to be called by the name of Christians, yet are in truth deuoted wordlings, who professing Christ with their mouthes deny him in their liues and workes. For the faithfull are children of the same father, members of the same body whereof Christ is the head, and coheires of the same glorious kingdome, where they shall raigne together in all happines for euermore; and therefore being mutually conioyned in so many bondes of loue, they are to respect one another more then those, who being onely a kinne vnto them in the flesh, are enemies to their profession, yea euen to themselues, for being worldlings they loue onely their owne, and not those whom Christ hath chosen out of the world; yea enemies to Gods grace and strangers to the com-

Seēt. 9.

Next vnto our childre, charge and familie, we must releiue our spirituall kindred.

Tic. 1. 16.

Ioh. 7. 5. 6. 7.
& 15. 19.

Q

monwealth

Gal. 6. 10.

1. Ioh. 3. 17.

Rom. 12. 13.

Math. 10. 41.

Math. 25. 40.

Math. 12. 50.

Sect 10.
Next vnto our
spirituall kin-
dred vvee must
respect our be-
nefactours.

mon-wealth of Israel, vassals of Sathan, and in the state of perdition. And for this also we haue our warrant out of the Scriptures; for as wee are bound to do good vnto all, so especially to those who are of the household of faith. Gal. 6. 10. As our mercy must extend to all, so principally to our brethren who stand in neede, 1. Ioh. 3. 17. As we must communicate vnto all that want, so it is required chiefly that we distribute vnto the necessity of the Saints. Rom. 12. 13. And these almes about others haue the speciall promises of reward. So Math. 10. 41. *Hee that receiueth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall haue a Prophets reward, and he that receiueth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receiue a righteous mans reward. And whosoener shall giue to drinke to one of these little ones a cuppe of cold water onely in the name of a Disciple, shall in no wise loose their reward.* And Math. 25. 40. Hee entreth the faithfull into the possession of his kingdome, because in doing the workes of mercie to his brethren, they had done it to himselfe. And therefore Dauid did extend his goodnesse chiefly to the Saints and excellent. Psal. 16. 3. And our Sauour himselfe professeth those to be his brethren, sisters and mother, who did the will of his Father which is in heauen. Math. 12. 50.

In the next place vnto these wee are to respect our benefactours, vnto whom we our selues haue been beholding; for it standerh with the rule of iustice, equitie and thankfulnessse, that we should requite their kindnesse, and doe good vnto them

in

in the time of their neede, who haue beene beneficiall vnto vs in releiuing our wants. And this argument the Apostle vseth to perswade the *Corinthians* to contribute vnto the necessity of the poore Saints. 2. Cor. 8. 14. *That now (saith hee) at this time, your abundance may be a supply to their wants, that their abundance also may be a supply for your wants, that there may be an equalitie.* In which regard our benefactors are to be preferred before our kindred in the flesh; because though we be tyed vnto these in a neerer bond of alliance & blood, yet we are more straightly bound to the other in the bond of iustice & common equitie. according to that Pro. 18. 24. *A man that hath friends must shew himselfe friendly, and there is a friend that sticketh closer then a brother.*

2. Cor. 8. 14.

Pro. 18. 24.

Next vnto our benefactors wee must extend our bounty to our kindred, who are not onely of the same flesh with vs in respect of nature and common parents, but in regard of neere alliance and consanguinitie being lately and immediately sprung from the same Progenitours. And this bond of naturall affection tyed euen churlish *Laban* himselfe in all kindnesse and loue to his kinsman *Iacob*, till it was broken by his worldlinesse and the violent strength of his greedie couetousnesse. Gen. 29. 13. 14. From whence wee learne that they are more churlish then *Laban*, who hauing abundance wil not acknowledge their poore kindred, nor Minister any thing to their necessities.

Sect. 11.

Next vnto our benefactors we must extend our bountie to our kindred in the flesh.

Gen. 29. 13. 14.

In the next place vnto these wee are bound to

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Sect. 12.

Next vnto our

kindred, wee
must relieue
common friends
and neighbors.

*Aug. 8. de doct.
Christ.*

Pro. 27. 10.

Sect. 13.
Next vnto our
neighbours wee
must respect
our Country-
men, and then
strangers.
Deut. 15. 7.

Leuit. 25. 35.

relieue before others, our common friends and neere neighbors, who dwell in the same place & parish, for besides the bond of neighborhood, we are in this regard also to preferre them before others, because through Gods prouidence they are first offered to our view, and haue the opportunity of discouering vnto vs their wants and miseries. To which purpose one saith; whenas thou canst not doe good vnto all, thy care must principally extend to those, who by place, time and other opportunities, are, as it were by a certaine lot, more straightly and neerely ioyned vnto thee. And the rather because being neere at hand they are as occasion serueth ready, to performe vnto vs mutually according to their poore power all good offices and Christian duties, according to that Pro. 27. 20. *better is a neighbour that is nere, then a brother farre of.*

Next vnto our neere neighbours we are to relieue the inhabitants of the same City, Sheere, and Countrey, before those who are of other nations; according to that Deut. 15. 7. *If there be among you a poore man, of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land, which the Lord thy God giueth thee, thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poore brother.* And vers. 11. *Thou shalt open thine hand wide vnto thy brother, to thy poore and thy needie in thy land, &c.* But yet wee are not so onely to respect them, as that we are to neglect poore Christians of other Countreies, but they also are in the next place to be relieved, according to that Leuit. 25. 35. *If thy brother bee*

WAXEN

waxen poore and fallen in decay with thee, then thou shalt releue him, yea though he be a stranger or a sojourner, that he may liue with thee. And this is a part of that good hospitalitie which the Apostle exhorteth vnto, Rom: 12. 3. and commendeth vnto

Rom: 12. 13.

Heb: 13. 2.

Gen: 18. 3. &

19. 2.

Esa. 58. 7.

Be not forgetfull (saith he) to entertaine strangers, for thereby some haue entertained Angells vnawares.

And this is a part of that fast which God requirereth, that we bring the poore which are exiled, or cast out, into our houses; especially when as they suffer banishment for the profession of the Gospell; for then in receiuing them wee receiue Christ, and performe one of those works of mercie, which shall be so richly rewarded at the last day, Math. 25. 35. *I was a stranger and you tooke me in.* In which regard they are to be reliued with the chiefe of our spirituall kindred, and to haue the next place to our owne children and familie, reserued for them. And this dutie is commended in *Gaius* who charitably entertayned the brethren who were strangers, and the neglect hereof condemned in proud *Diotrephes*, who receiued not the brethren himselfe, and also forbad those that would. *Ioh. Epist. 3. 5. 10.*

Math: 25. 35.

Ioh. epist. 3.

v. 5. 10.

Sect. 14.

We must suffer

our bounty to

extend to our

enemies.

Rom. 12. 20.

Yea so full of mercy and christian charitie ought we to be, that our good deeds, as occasion serueth, must not only extend vnto our freinds, neighbors and strangers, but euen vnto our enemies; according to that Rom: 12. 20, *If thine enemye hunger feede him, if he thirst giue him drinke.* An example whereof we haue in the good Prophet *Elisba*, who

2 King. 6. 22.

would not suffer the Aramites to be smitten with the sword, but contrariwise caused them to be relieved in their necessitie. whereby he so wonne their loue, that they came no more to invade the land of Israel.

Señ. 15.
A caution for
the better vnder-
standing of
the former
rules.

And thus we haue shewed in what order we are to proceede in doing these workes of mercy, preferring our wiues next vnto our selues before all whatsoeuer, our Parents before our children, and these with the rest of our familie before all others; our spirituall kindred and benefactors before them who are onely of our kindred in the flesh; our kindred before common freinds and neighbours, and these before strangers, and strangers also before enemies; so that if our liberalitie cannot through the straitenesse of our estates extend to all sorts, then must we stretch it as farre as we can, according to this order. Which is to be vnderstood if they be in other things alike, that is, like in want and pouertie, and like in pietie and honestie; for otherwise we must (as hath beene shewed) releue those who are our enemies being in extreame necessitie, euen before our owne children being but in ordinarie want; and those who are religious & vertuous being further of, before those who being vicious and gracelesse are neerer vnto vs. And so when we are linked vnto any in many of these bonds, we are to preferre them before any of those to whom we are but bound in some one particular, if they be not our Parents or vnder our own charge & gouernment; as a godly kinsman, before one who is as religious but nothing

thing a kinne vnto vs; or a kinne vnto vs, but not
so vertuous and religious; a kinsman, neighbour
and benefactor, before either a kinsman, or neigh-
bour, or a benefactor singly and alone.

CHAP. 13.

*Of the maner how, and time when, almes are best
and most seasonably bestowed.*

AND so I come from the persons, who are
both to giue and receiue almes, to speake
of the maner how they may most conueniently
be distributed. And this is either more publike
and common; or more priuate and particular. In
regard of the former the best course which we can
take in giuing our almes, is to follow the lawes
and custome of our country; as among vs to put
what we can spare into the poores box, or to de-
liuer it to the Collectors for the poore, to be di-
stributed, as out of the common purse, according
to their discretion who are chosen to this office.
And for our priuate almes which wee giue with
our owne hands, we are to deliuer them to such
poore, as by our owne enquirie we haue found
out to be honest and needy; or else to such others
as God by a more immediate prouidence doth
vnexpectedly and extraordinarily offer and pre-
sent vnto vs for the exercise of our charitie.

As for the giuing of our almes at our dores to
common beggers, though I doe not vterly con-
demne

Sect. 1.

How we ought
to giue our
almes both
publikely and
priately.

Sect. 2.

What is to be
thought of gi-

uing our almes
at our dores to
common beg-
gers.

demne this maner of giuing, whilest sufficient order is not taken, and accordingly duely executed by the Magistrate, for the reformation of this disorder; especially when the whole streame of mens charitie doth not runne this way, but some small riuulet, or as it were some litle pipe or quill; and when this is giuen to those who are in apparent miserie, as the aged and decerepir, the lame, sicke and blinde, for the reliefe of their present necessitie; yet can I in no wise approue it, if after this maner only we exercise our mercy and charitie giuing without difference to all that come to the dore, as vnto loose and idle persons, who are strong and able to labor, & common beggers and vagabonds, who liue by the sweat of other mens browes. And my reasons are, because they who are truly poore shall by these meanes be neglected, whilest these lazie drones deuoure that which of right belongeth vnto them. Secondly, those who are bold, impudent, and most importunate, will oftentimes speed better then those who are modest and shamefast. Thirdly, our almes shall by this meanes be distributed without equalitie, some hauing all and some nothings; and without discretion, because being giuen thus at random, they cannot be fitted to the quantitie or qualitie of their wants. Fourthly, this kinde of giuing, nourisherh and increaseth the number of vagrants and inordinate persons, encouraging and heartning them to continue in their idle, lewd, and wicked courses, without any feare of God or subiection vnto men. Fifthly, the allowance

ance of this custome crosseth Gods ordinance, Deut. 15. 4.
 who would not haue a common begger in Israel,
 and proclaymeth to the world both the misgo-
 uernment of Magistrates who doe not reforme
 this disorder, and the hard-heartednes of priuate
 men, who through their want of mercy, bountie,
 and compassion, thrust their neighbours into
 these base and inordinate courses. And lastly,
 those excellent lawes, which haue lately beene
 made among vs, for the reforming this abuse, are
 disobeyed and transgressed; and so the christian
 Magistrate iustly offended, whom we are bound
 to obey in all things lawfull or indifferent, and
 much more requiring such things as are godly
 and commendable, as tending to Gods glory, the
 prosperous estate of the Church and common-
 wealth, and the great good of all particular per-
 sons.

And this shall suffice to haue spoken of the man-
 ner. The next point to be considered is the time
 when these almes-deeds are to bee performed;
 And that is in the whole course of our liues, when
 we haue abilitie, and finde fit oportunitie of do-
 ing these workes of mercy. But of this I haue al-
 ready spoken, and therefore I will here only shew,
 what I thinke concerning those almes-deeds and
 workes of mercy, which are not done in our life
 time, but by our last will and testament, appoin-
 ted to be done after the death of the benefactor.
 The which actions of liberalitie are to be esteem-
 ed and censured, according to the qualitie and
 condition of the persons by whom they are per-
 formed;

Sect. 3.
 Almes giuen
 by will to be
 esteemed ac-
 cording to the
 qualitie of the
 persons who
 giue them.

formed; for either out of loue and obedience towards God, and christian charitie and compassion towards men, they are done by such as haue according to their abilitie been exercised in these pious and charitable workes in their whole life, after their sound conversion vnto God; or out of selfe-loue, vaine-glory or seruile feare, they are performed by such as haue vtterly neglected these workes of mercy in their life time, & now would make some satisfaction for this neglect after their departure. For the former we are to iudge that it is a good conclusion of a like good premises, and a manifest signe of their loue towards God and their neighbours, when as they are not content to doe these workes of mercy in their life time, but also take care that they may be continued euen after their death; and not only relieue the poore members of Christ whilest they liued with them, but also bequeath vnto them legacies after their departure, and account them among their children and heyres, by leauing vnto them a portion with them, and a part in their inheritance in lieu of thankfulnes towards their Saviour, who hath made them coheyres with himselfe in his heauenly kingdome. Neither is there iust exceptions to be taken, if these workes of mercy done by them after death, doe exceede in number and quantitie those which they haue done in their life time, seing herein they deale no otherwise with the poore, than with their owne children and dearest friends, vpon whom they bestow more by Will than euer before they had
from

from them. And it is iust, that men should keepe the largest portion of their goods while they liue for their owne maintenance, giuing to the poore what they may conueniently spare from this vse; and very charitable if they deligne a great part of their estate to religious and pious vses, when as themselues shall haue no further vse of it.

But concerning the other, who haue vtterly neglected the works of mercy in the whole course of their liues, and thinke it sufficient if they appoint somewhat for these vses after their death; there is not the like iudgment. In christian policie they are not absolutely to be condemned, least hereby they should take occasion to neglect the workes of mercy liuing and dying; no nor yet in christian charitie, seeing these may be the after-fruits of their late repentance. Besides, these good workes are assuredly good vnto the receiuers; and in respect of the giuers thus much may be said, that they do much better than those who doe neglect them altogether, taking no care that any good should be done either in their liues or after death. And though now they can keepe their goods no longer, yet being to part with them of necessitie, it is good that they make choice freely to bestow them on these good vses; wherein they are much to bee preferred before those who bestow them vpon such vses, as are either euill, superfluous, superstitious, or meere worldly and carnall. Neither may they iustly be taxed for doing these good workes now, but their long delay is to be blamed, and because they

Sc&. 4.
What is to be
thought of
those that
wholly deferre
giuing almes
till their death.

would not be perswaded to do them sooner.

Sec. 5.
Giuing in our
life time is
much more
commendable
and acceptable

Eccli. 18. 22. 5

Which fault that we may auoyde, let vs consider that it is much better and more commendable, to giue liberally to these good vses in our life time, making our owne hands our executors, and our eyes our ouer-seers, than to leaue our goods to these vses to bee disposed of at the discretion of others. According to that Eccli: 18. 22. *Let nothing binder thee to pay thy vow in due time, and deferre not vntill death to be iustified. When thou hast enough remember the time of hunger, and when thou art rich thinke vpon pouertie and neede.* Secondly, it is much more acceptable to God, as being a more infallible signe of a stronger faith and more firme affiance in him. For if in our life time we giue our goods to the poore because God requireth it, we therby euidently declare that we rest vpon Gods prouidence and promises for our prouision, seing we dis-furnish our selues of a good part of our meanes, euen whilest we haue occasion to vse them. Whereas if we keepe all to our selues till the honre of death, we may be well suspected of diffidence and want of faith, which is the cause why we doe not trust so much in God, as in our owne prouision and store which we haue about vs. So also it is an euidence of greater loue and obedience, if at Gods commandement, and for his sake wee can willingly part with our goods, when they are still in our power, and might be conuerted to our owne vse; than if we bestow them to such vses, when as death approaching we can keepe them no longer. For it is a small matter

to

to giue vnto God that, which though we would neuer so fayne we cannot carry with vs, and it is next to neglecting, to doe so late. For what great thing is it, if we be perswaded to put off our clothes, when as we are ready to go to bed, to giue away the reliques of our meate in the Inne, when we are ready to take horse, and to set forward our journey into another country? Yea what thanks is it, if we then giue away our apparell, when we haue so long worne it, that it will hange on our backes no longer, and then part with our meate, when whether we will or no, it shall be taken from vs; especially when it is done in this hope, that our rotten raggs shall be changed into robes of immortalitie, and our perishing meate shall be supplied with the bread of life? To which purpose an ancient Father saith; *Alas poore wretch,* Basil. in Dist. anacore Sermon 2. *wilt thou then be liberall and kinde vnto men, when as thou canst no longer liue among them? shall I then only say that thou art louing to thy brethren, when as I shall see thee a dead carcase? Thou art no doubt worthy great praise of thy liberalitie, and great honour and grace is due vnto thee, when lying in thy graue, and being turned vnto dust thou shalt appeare munificent and bountifull.*

Thirdly, It is required not only that we giue, Sect. 5. but also that we giue seasonably, and that is when Giuing in our life-time most seasonable and best fitted to occasions. we see our neighbours wants, and haue power and abilitie to helpe and relieue them; For as in sowing our seede, we doe not thinke it enough if at some times wee be ready to cast it into the ground, but we haue also speciall respect to the

season and seede-time ; so is it in sowing the seeds our almes deeds , which if wee sow not before death, it is, as if we should deferre the sowing of our seede, till the very time when we should reape our haruest. Now are we sayling towards to the Holy Land, and these works of mercy, like a good gale of winde, drue vs forward vnto the withed hauen ; now are we to dispatch our spirituall market, wherein God offereth vnto vs for temporarie trifles euerlasting treasures ; now is the time of our christian warfare, wherein we are to fight against the deuill, the world, and our owne carnall and couetous lusts, and then we ouercome the world and our selues, when we are wholly taken vp with the workes of mercy ; and can part with our earthly goods, in loue towards God, and compassion towards our neighbours. But if we deferre them till after death, and will giue nothing to the poore till all must be taken from vs ; it is like a faire gale of winde after shipwracke, as if we should set out our wares when the market is done, & make great braggs of our valour, when the fight is finished and we put to flight. Besides, the workes of mercy are best done when they are fitted to the occasions and wants of those vnto whom they are performed ; and not to giue vnto them when their necessitie requireth, but when we can best spare our goods, is as if the steward should giue foode to the familie, not at meale-times, or when they are most hungry, but when as himselfe hath nothing else to doe ; or when he can keepe the foode in his store-house no longer,
because

because theeeues haue digged through the wall,
and are now ready with violence to take it away
from him.

Fourthly, It is much better that we doe our
selues the workes of mercy in our life time, than
to leaue them to bee done by others after our
deaths (not onely because the seed-time being
much more seasonable, we may assuredly expect
a much more fruitfull haruest, but also) because
if we doe not take the time present, and relieue
our poore brethrē whilest it is in the power of our
hands to doe it, we can haue no certaintie that they
will euer be done by vs at all. For either we may
be stripped of all our goods before our death, and
so haue nothing to bequeath to these vses, or
death may take vs suddenly away, and giue vs no
time to dispose of our goods; or our sicknes may
be of such a nature, that it will depriue vs of the
vse of our memory and vnderstanding; or else
if all things be left in good order by our Will,
yet may this our last Testament be concealed and
suppressed, or defeated & made voyde vpon some
nice point in law, or vniust testimonie of some
false witnesses, or not be performed according
to our purpose and proiect, through the dishone-
stie and corruption of our executors. For the
auoyding of all which dangers, let vs take the
Wise-mans counsell, Pro. 3. 27. *With-hold not good
from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of
thy hand to doe it:* and the Apostles exhortation,
Gal. 6. 10. *whilest we haue opportunitie, let vs do good
vnto all men.* And let vs remember that death will

Self 6.
No certaintie
of doing good
by legacies.

Pro. 3. 27.

*una trar pfecta
litera, vnum nō
probe appositum
signum totam
sententiam mu-
tare ac stricam
facere valent.*
Basil. in Diuit.
Auaris Ser. 2.

Pro. 3. 27.

Gal. 6. 10.

not

not be long in comming, and that the covenant of the graue is not shewed vnto vs, and so doe good before we dye, and according to our abilitie stretch out our hands to giue vnto him. Let vs not defraud our selues of the good day, nor let the part of a good desire over-passe vs; because we shall leaue our trauels vnto another, and our labours to be deuided by lot. as the sonne of Syrach perswadeth. Chap. 14. 12. 13. 14. 15.

Ecclesi. 14. 12. 13.

Sect. 7.

Giuing almes
in our life-time
most furable &
comely for a
Christian.

Fiftly, it is most comely and furable that a charitable life should goe before a charitable death, and it well befeemeth a Christian so to liue continually as he meaneth to dye. For who can expect a pleasant epilogue, after a direfull tragedie? or that he should be pittifull, compassionate and liberall in the end, who in all his former course hath beene cruell, hard-hearted and niggardly? or that God will honour him with a close of bountie and blessednes, who hath all his whole life dishonored God & wronged his poore Saints with his extreame miserablenesse and gripplenes? or how shall a man take his words spoken in extremitie of sicknes, *I giue and bequeath pounds and hundreds to these and these good vses*, who would not in his whole life part with a few pence to releue the poores necessitie and preserue them from staruing? who seeing such dissonancie and disagreement betweene his present words and former practise, would not thinke that he raued and talked idly, rather then our of a setled iudgement and good deliberation? Againe, it better fureth with the nature of these good workes to be done by our selues in our life-time, then to be left vnto
the

the discretion of other to be done by them after our death ; in which respect our Sauour calleth our good workes by the name of lights, to imply vnto vs, that wee must see them goe before vs, and not suffer them by others to be held behinde our backs.

Lastly, howsoeuer, we are to iudge charitably of such actions, when we see them done, because wee discern onely the outward worke, but cannot search the heart and secret thoughts ; yet when as we see all on a sudden crueltie turned into mercie, and miserly hardnesse into profuse bountie; the hands wide opened towards the approach of death for the releefe of the poore, which haue bene close shut in the whole life ; and the workes of mercy practised, which alwaies before haue been vtterly neglected ; there is great cause of iealousie and doubting, that these actions proceede not from those right and religious causes which set the true Christian a worke to doe the like things, but rather from sinister, worldly and carnall respects, which haue ouerswayed and ruled them in the whole course of their liues. Not from the loue of God, Christian obedience, charity and mercy towards the poore ; for if these graces had residence in their hearts, they would haue produced the like effects in their health and strength ; but rather from selfe loue, which is alwayes accompanied with carnall feare and vaine glory ; whereby they are made willing to imploy their goods to these pious and charitable vses, when as they see they can keepe them no longer,

Sec. 3.
Almesdeeds to
bee suspected
when they
are onely done
after death.

either to eternize their names in this world by these long lasting monuments, or to escape the better before Gods iudgement seat, where now they must giue vp the account of their stewardship, and to be freed from that fearefull condemnation in the world to come. From which iea-
lousie and suspicion there is no means to be freed, vnlesse these workes of mercy thus performed do apparantly proceede from serious and sound repentance, and a liuely faith in Christ; which are seldome granted to any in their death-bed, who haue neglected and contemned them, through the whole course of their liues.

CHAP. 14.

Of the properties of the Christians almes, wherein they differ from those which are done by worldlings; And of the diuers sorts and kindes of them.

Sect. 1.

That there are many & great differences betwene the almes of Christians and of worldlings. And first in the causes mouing them.

THE next point which I propounded in this duty of almesdeedes was their properties, whereby the pious and charitable almes of Christians, which are the vndoubted signes of a godly and blessed man, may bee discerned, from those counterfet almes which are done by hypocrites and worldlings; the which are great and manifold. For first they differ in the causes and fountaines from which they arise and spring; For the almes of Christians are the fruites of a liuely and iustifying faith, and are done out of vnfeined
loue

loue and obedience towards God: and therefore is a Christian mercifull vnto others, because he is assured of Gods mercie to himselfe; therefore doth he giue small things to men, because he hath receiued great things from God; and for this cause is he liberall to those that neede his helpe, not because they haue deserued it, but because God hath commanded it. So also his almes spring from Christian charity, mercy and compassion towards the poore, because hee is a member of Christ, and of the household of faith, or at least a creature of God and of the same flesh. But the worldlings alms arise frō selfe-loue, wherby in his almes he aimeth at some temporarie and earthly good to be deriued by them vnto himselfe, out of pride and vaine-glory, that hee may bee praised and magnified amongst men, or may merit a farre greater reward at the hands of God, or out of seruile feare of Gods iudgments in this life or the life to come, which by this meanes hee would auert and turne away from him; and therefore not proceeding from true charitie they profit nothing. *1. Cor. 13. 3.*

*Matth. 6.**1. Cor. 13. 3.*

Secondly, the Christian sheweth mercy, being enclined thereunto by the motion of Gods spirit, and the inward fountaine of goodnesse, which is thereby wrought in him, which make him when hee wanteth occasions of doing good, to enquire and seeke after them: but the worldlings mercie is the meere worke of nature, and is mooued and excited onely by the presence of some miserable object, which sturreth vp in him the naturall passi-

on of pittie for the present: but no sooner is the object remooued out of sight, but his mercie and compassion presently ceaseth.

Sect. 2.
That they differ in their ends.

Thirdly, they differ in their ends; for the main end at which the Christian aimeth in his almes, is, that God by them may be glorified; and the subordinate ends are the good of his neighbours, the adorning of his profession with these workes of mercie, the edification of others by his Christian example, his owne present good in the assurance of Gods fauour, and his future glorie in the life to come. But the hypocrite aimeth cheifely at his owne glorie and good, either for the obtaining of some worldly benefits, or the auoiding of some temporall or euerlasting punishment; or finally, that hee may satisfie Gods iustice for his sinnes, make him beholding vnto him, and merit at his hands euerlasting happinesse.

Sect. 3.
That they differ in the matter. And first, in respect of propriety.

Fourthly, they differ in the matter of their almes, first in respect of propriety; for the Christian is liberall in giuing out of his owne store wherewith God hath blessed him, and which he hath gotten by his honest labours in his lawfull calling: but the worldling giueth out of that which is other mens, and hauing raked much together by oppression, extortion, deceit, vsury, simonie and such like vnlawfull meanes, he is content to giue out of it some penny-almes, to make some satisfaction for his sinnes, and to stop the crie of his conscience, that he may more securely sleepe in his wicked courses, and so more quietly goe into hell.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, in respect of the quantity; for the Christian giueth liberally not onely out of his abundance but out of his mediocritie & meane estate, and spaeth something willingly out of his owne necessities, if the extreame necessitie of the poore require it. But the worldling giueth with a niggardly heart and hand, and will hardly giue vnto the poore the least part of his superfluities, and that not before his owne turne bee serued in furnishing himselfe with all worldly vanities, whereby he may be delighted in the fruition of all sinfull pleasures.

2. In the quantity.

Thirdly, in respect of quality; for the Christian giueth vnto the poore things profitable and wholesome, but the worldling his basest refuse, things sluttish and filthy which hee would not giue to the vilest creatures by which hee hath any delight or benefit.

3. In the quality.

Fifthly, they differ in the object or extent, for the Christians mercy extendeth to all that stand in neede, euen to Infidells because they are Gods creatures; to their enemies, because they looke not to their deserts but to Gods commandements; but especially it is exercised in releiuing poore Christians, because they are the children of God and members of Christ. And though they bee ready to doe good vnto all, yet chiefly to those who are of the household of faith: though their goodnesse like their heavenly Fathers reacheth to the good and bad, yet especially it extendeth to Gods Saints and to the excellent; and because it cannot extend to God himselfe, by reason of

Seet. 4.
They differ in the object and extent.

Gal. 6. 10.

Math. 9. 45.

Phil. 16. 3.

his all-sufficiencie. Therefore to shew their loue towards him, they exercise it towards his sonnes and seruants, who are aboue all others most deare vnto him. But the worldlings mercy reacheth only vnto those who haue somewaies deserued it at his hands, or who (as they imagine) may deserue it, or to his kindred, friends or such as are some way linked vnto him in the bondes of nature, going no further herein then Publicans and Hypocrites, whose mercy Christ reiecteth, as being of no worth in the sight of God. Mathew

Math. 5. 46.

Sec. 5.

They differ in their manner of giuing, i. in respect of simplicitie

1. Rom. 12. 8.

5. 46. 47.

Sixtly, they differ in their minde and manner of giuing; For 1. the Christian giueth with a plaine, simple and honest heart according to that Rom. 12. 8. *He that giueth let him doe it with simplicitie.* Not intending by his almes his owne praise and profit, or yet to please men, but only to obey and please God; which our Sauour expresseth to be such a simple kinde of giuing, *wherein the left hand knoweth not what the right hand doth.* Wherby is meant that hee doth not make shew of his almes vnto those who are next vnto him. No nor often presenteth them to the view of his owne conscience; least his minde should bee too much exalted in the remembrance of them. Not that it is vnlawfull to giue almes before others, for elsewhere he commandeth vs, *that our light of a godly life should shine before men, that they seeing our good workes may glorifie our father which is in heauen;* but his meaning is, that wee should not doethem to this end to be seene of men, that so

Math. 6. 3.

Math. 5. 16.

Non est ingrata Deo que visa fuerit ab hominibus elemosina, sed tunc

we

we may haue the praise our selues, and rob God of his glory. For our Sauour like a good Philition feeling our pulse, easily discerned how apt we are to be welled with the dropie of Hypocrisie and to be puffed vp with the winde of vaine glory, which caused him so carefully to presse vs strictly to the auoyding of the least occasions which might corrupt vs with so subtle and dangerous a vice. But the wordling in his workes of mercy hunteth after some aduantage, or at least for the glory of the world and praise of men, before whom he doth his almes-deedes that he may be seen of them. So one saith, *that there are some which giue vnto the poore a little that they may receiue much, and vnder the pretence of giuing almes, do seeke to inrich themselves, which rather is to be called hunting, birding, and fishing then almes giuing; for so birds and fishes are caught when by the small baite they are allured to swallow the sharpe hooke. But this hope of retribution (as saith another) should be far from them who doe these workes of mercie; for if profit bee expected it is not humanitie, but putting out of a benefite to vsurie.* Neither is it an act of mercy but of selfe loue, which maketh them giue to the poore, that out of their liberalitie they may raise aduantage vnto themselves, by binding them vnto perpetuall vassallage with the bondes of their benefits, and making them to earne it double at their hands by their painefull labour. But this is to giue meat to the poore as they giue prouender to their horses, not out of any humanitie and loue vnto them, but out of selfe loue, that they may here-

*ideo facili est vti
risa sit. Chrys.
in Mat. 6.
Panagloria le-
uiter volat, le-
uiter penetra-
sed non leuiter in-
figit vulnus;
cito interficit.
Bernard.*

Verf. 2.

Math. 23. 5.

Hieronym. ad
Neposian.

L. 1. in 1. tit.
6. cap. 12.

by

by be strengthened and encouraged to doe them better seruice ; or as the Husbandman giueth foode to his sheepe, feeding them onely to this end, that hee afterwarde may bee fed of them.

SECT. 6.
2. In respect of
humilitie.

Secondly, the Christian doth these workes of mercie with great humilitie, remembering that whatsoeuer he giueth to the poore for Gods sake, he hath first receiued it from God with all other blessings which hee enioyeth ; In which respect when he doth the most, hee acknowledgeth that he doth farre lesse then his dutie, and that with much infirmitie and weakenesse; and therefore in this regard he humbly confesseth that his almes are sufficiently rewarded if they bee graciously pardoned ; the which, as it maketh him to carry himselfe humbly before God, so also meekly and gently towards the poore. But the wordling when he doth these workes of mercie, is puffed vp with pride, thinking that thereby hee satisfieth for his sinnes, meriteth heauen, and maketh God beholding vnto him forsooth, by giuing him a feather of his owne soule, and an handfull of corne of his owne haruest. And as he is proud towards God, so arrogant, superstitious and insolent towards his poore neighbour, the which hee sheweth in his loftie and ouertopping lookes, his insulting speeches, and seuer examinations ; which so leaueneth and sowreth his gifts, that oftentimes they are more distastfull to the receiuer, then wronges and iniuries, if at least they be sweetened with outward complements and shewes of humanitie.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, The Christian is willing and cheerefull in doing these workes of mercy, because hee knoweth that his heavenly Father doth loue a chearefull giuer, and looketh more to the heart of him that giueth, then to the quantitie of his gift, and that it is not inough for vs to doe good, and to be rich in good workes, vnlesse we be also *readie to distribute and willing to communicate*, as it is 1. Tim. 6. 18. Besides his outward workes of mercie proceed from an inward habite, and therefore it is no more painefull or greiuous vnto him to doe them, then for the eye to see or the eare to heare; yea rather they are the delight of his soule, and his meate and drinke to doe the will of his Father. And this cheerefulnesse of his heart he sheweth (as hath beene said) in the pleasantnesse of his countenance, in his sweete and comfortable wordes, and in the action it selfe, by his readie and speedy giuing. For his workes of mercie are not drawne out of him through the importunity of suters, but are kindly sent out of his hart, and (like waters out of the spring) doe readily flow from the inward fountaine of his bountie & benignitie. Neither is he apt to make delaies, because they so afflict oftentimes the heart of the poore suter, that hee preferreth a quicke deniall before a slow grant; but he gladly layeth hold vpon the occasion when it is first offred; and doubleth the gift by his speedie giuing. But the worldling doth his workes of mercy grudgingly and churlishly, & *dum manu dat, vultu negat*, whilst his hand giueth, his looke denyeth: and proudly

T insulteth

Sect. 7.

3. In respect of cheerefull giuing.

Cox & non substantiam Deu pensat, nec operatur quid in eius sacrificio, sed ex quanto preferatur. Gregor. 1. Tim. 6. 18.

insulteth ouer the poore in their miseries, by his rough speeches, bitter taunts, and harsh expostulations, turning his bread that hee giueth into stones and grauell; so that hee doth not so much comfort the poore man by his gifts, as hee doth vex and afflict his soule with his manner of giuing; causing him in his heart to preferre a courteous refusall, before a grant that is so sowre and churlish. And as he giueth harshly, so hardly and slowly, putting of and euen tyring the poore Suter with many delayes and denials. And when he giueth, it is rather because hee is impatient of importunitie, like the vnrighteous iudge spoken of in the Gospell, then pittifull and compassionate in the sight of the poore mans miserie. *Sed non contulit beneficium qui sic dedit, sed extorsit qui accepit*, he bestoweth not a benefit who so giueth, but hee extorreth a gift who so receiuerh it.

Luk. 18. 5.

Sect. 8.
They differ in
time.

Lastly they differ in time, for the Christian exerciseth himselfe in the workes of mercy in the whole course of his life, and giueth his goods to the poore whilest he might inioy them himselfe: But the worldling is onely liberall at the approach of death, and then alone he is content to imploy them to these vses, whenas he seeth he can keepe them no longer. And that not out of any loue towards God or his neighbours, but out of feare of approaching iudgement, and that dreadfull account which he must presently make before a iust and terrible iudge; or out of selfe loue either that he may gaine the vaine glory of the world, or that he may satisfie for his sinnes, and so escape eternall

nall condemnation. In which respect hee giueth to the poore, and *casteth his bread upon the face of the waters*, as the Merchant casts his goods into the sea in the time of a storme, to preserue the ship from sinking, and himselfe from drowning. For were he not in danger to make shipwracke of his soule, and of sinking into the gulfe of hell, and condemnation, he would be no more liberall at his death, then he hath alwaies been in the whole course of his life.

And thus haue I shewed the great and manifold differences betweene the almes and workes of mercy, which are done by true Christians, and those which are performed by worldlings and hypocrites. Now what remaineth but to perswade all those who feare God, and haue any care of their owne soules, that they content not themselves with that false counterfet, and shadow of mercy, but that they labour after that which is true and substantiall. For as our Sauour sayd of the righteousnesse of the Scribes and Pharisees, so may I say in this case: *Except your mercie exceede the mercy of worldlings and hypocrites, yee shall in no case enter into the Kingdome of heauen.*

Sect. 7.
The conclusio.

Math. 5. 20

The last thing to bee considered is the diuers kinds of alms, the which are principally 3. giuing, forgiuing, and free-lending; For not onely do we releue the poore when we giue vnto them, but also when wee ease them of the burthen of debt wherewith they are oppressed. To which dutie wee are bound, when wee see our neighbour decayed in his estate, and not able to pay what hee

Sect. 10.
Of forgiuing debts.

hath borrowed; for when by the hand of God he is cast downe, wee are not with the waight of our hand to keepe him downe, but by the lightning of his load, wee must helpe him to rise againe: which mercie, if wee ordinarily shew to a brute beast, when wee see him lying vnder his burthen, how much more should wee exercise it towards those who are of the same flesh, children of the same father, and members of the same bodie?

Exod. 22. 26.

And this is commanded Exod. 22. 26. *If thou at all take thy neighbors raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliuer it vnto him by then the Sunne goeth downe.*

Nehem. 5. 11.

27. *For that is his couering onely, it is his raiment for his skinne: wherein shall he sleepe? And it shall come to passe, when he crieth vnto me, that I will heare him, for I am gracious.* The which dutie good Nehemiah

Luk. 6 35.

caused the princes of the people to put in practise, as we may see, Nehem. chap. 5. 11. *Restore I pray you to them, euen this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliue-yards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corne, and of the wine, and the oile, that ye exact of them.* The which

Esay. 58. 6.

our Sauour also requireth, when as hee biddeth vs to lend, *looking for nothing againe*, in case our brother bee not able to pay. And this is a part of that fast which God so much esteemeth. Esay 58. 6. *Is not this (saith he) the fast that I haue chosen, to loose the bands of wickednesse, and to vndoe the heauie burthens, and to let the oppressed goe free, and that ye breake euerie yoke?* And in this regard euery yeere should be the Christians 'ubile, wherein all debts are to bee remitted to the poore, who haue
not

not wherewith to mak payment, which if we per-
forme not, but cruelly catch our brethren by
their throats, and cast them into prison, to take
our penny-worths (as they say) on their bones, and
to make dice of them; then surely, we may iustly
expect that our Lord and Master, to whom wee
owe so much, will take the same course with vs,
exacting his debt to the vttermost farthing, and
when wee are vnable to pay, casting vs into the
prison of outer darkenesse, where is nothing but
weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Math. 18. 28. 34

Finally we releiue the poore by free lending.
For as when their necessitie is generall, and their
pouerty so great, that their estate in it selfe is vn-
recoverable, we must giue freely without expect-
ing any returne; so when it onely pincheth them
for the time present, and they are brought, in
respect of their estate, but vpon their knees, so
that if we afford them our helping hand, they will
be able in the strength of their owne state to rise
of themselues, and by hauing the onely vse of our
goods for a while, will sufficiently repaire their
ruines, we are then bound to lend vnto them. Ac-
cording to that Deut. 15. 8. *Thou shalt open thine
hand wide to thy poore brother, and shalt surely lend
him sufficient for his neede in that which he wanteth.*
So our sauiour Christ commandeth vs, to giue vn-
to him that asketh, and from him that would borrow
of vs that we doe not turne away. Math. 5. 42. The
which must not be done with an vsurious intent
and expectation of aduantage, but so liberally
and freely, that we can bee content, when wee

Sect. 11.
Of free lending

Deut. 15. 8.

Luk. 6. 35.

Psal. 112. 5.

lend, to loose the principall, if the necessitie of our poore brother so requireth. Luk. 6. 35. which if we do, then shall wee hereby haue assurance, that we are those blessed men whom the *Psalmist* heere describeth; for as it is verse 5. *A good man sheweth fauour and lendeth*; and though the poore stile vs we shal finde the Lord, who is their surety, to be a sure pay-master, who will returne vnto vs for our earthly things heauenly, and for these that are contemptible and momentany, such treasures as are most excellent and eternall.

CHAP. 15.

That Almesdeedes are an act of righteousness, so that they bee not left arbitrary, but we in conscience are bound to doe them.

Sect. 1.
Of the meaning of the word righteousness.

AND thus hauing shewed what almesdeedes are, and how this dutie is to be performed; it now followeth, that I come to speake of the second part of the text, wherein are contained many effectuall and strong arguments, to moue euery Christian to the diligent and frequent doing of them. *His righteousness endureth for euer, his borne shall be exalted with honour.* In which words there are expressed two maine reasons to perswade vs to this dutie, the first is the lasting benefit of their workes of mercie vnto themselues; the other the establishment of their estate with honor and

and glory before God, men and the holy Angels, in this life and the life to come. The which principall arguments are like the roote and bodie of a goodly tree, from which spring many boughes and branches, or like the prime ancestours of the stocke and kindred, from whom doe issue a numerous posterity. Which that we may the more plainly conceiue, let vs breifely examine the meaning of the words. And first, by *righteousnes*, we are to vnderstand, not generally all righteousness which consisteth in our whole conformity to the Law, nor that whole part of Legall righteousness which consisteth in obedience to the second table; but certaine speciall fruites of this righteousness, in the works of mercy toward the poore, by a Synecdoche of the generall for the speciall: or, if you will, almesdeedes themselues, which (as I haue shewed) are by the Hebrewes called by the name of righteousness, and sometime by the name of mercy, to shew vnto vs, that it is such a grace which resteth not onely in an internall habite or bare affection of the heart and minde, but also exerciseth it selfe in the outward act of releeuing those whose penurious estates we pittie and commiserate. And this is a worke not onely of mercie, but of iustice, the which is such a vertue as giueth vnto euery one *לכל אדם*, those things which are due vnto them; that is, to our superiours reuerence and obedience, to our equals loue and friendship with all good offices and fruites of them; and to the poore and needy comfort and reliefe. And heereof it is, that the vulgar translation

Dan. 4. 27.

צדקה

חסד

Matth. 6. 1.

Deut. 24. 13.

1. Cor. 9. 9.

Pro. 11. 18.

Seet. 2.
That almes
deeds are abso-
lutely requi-
red, prou'd by
many testimo-
nies.

translation thus readeth that place of Matthew. chap. 6. 1. *Take heede that yee do: not your righteousnesse before men, to bee seene of them.* And so the olde interpreter hath rendred it, *righteousnesse*, because righteousness in the Hebrew phrase signifieth beneficence and almesdeeds; euen as contrariwise the 70. Interpreters haue rendred the Hebrew word *Tsedakah* signifying righteousness, *יְשׁוּעָה*, almes-deeds. Yea the Apostle himselfe doth best of all determine this point, for alledging this verse of the Psalme, to incite the Corinthians to beneficence and almes-deeds, he doth retaine the name of righteousness, to signifie these workes of mercy. *His righteousness remaineth for euer*; what righteousness? surely that which he had named in the words immediately going before, consisting in beneficence and giuing to the poore. And as the Psalmist here speaketh of the disperling and sowing of the workes of beneficence and almes-deeds; so the Wise-man signifieth the selfe-same duty by the phrase of sowing the seede of righteousness, Pro. 11. 18. *To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward.*

Now whereas almes-deeds are called by the name of righteousness, from hence we may gather a strong argument to perswade euery Christian to the doing of them. For they are not only workes of mercy, but also fruits of righteousness, and therefore are not left as things arbitrary and indifferent at our owne choice, to doe or leaue them vndone, as we thinke good; but are absolutely required and straightly injoynd in the law

law of God, which is the rule of righteousness, and with great earnestnesse pressed and vrged in the Gospell, as the fruits of our faith, and testimonies of our loue towards God and our neighbours. The which will more plainly appeare, if we consider, both some testimonies of scriptures, & some effectuall reasons grounded vpon them.

So Deut. 15. 11. *The poore shall neuer cease out of the land, therefore I command thee saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide vnto thy brother, to thy poore and to thy needy in thy land.* and Esa. 58. 7. The Lord

telleth vs, that the fast which he requireth and chuseth, is to deale our bread to the hungry, and to bring the poore that are cast out into our houses; when we see the naked that we couer them, and that we hide not our selues from our owne flesh. And these are the fruits of the iust man, who shall liue in his righteousness, if he hath giuen his bread to the hungry, and hath couered the naked with a garment. Ezech.

18. 7. Thus in the New Testament Iohn the Baptist giueth charge, that he who hath two coats, should impart to him that hath none, and that hee who hath meat should do likewise, Lu: 3. 11. that is, that

if we haue any thing to spare from our owne necessarie vse, we must be ready to releiue the poore with it, whom we see to be in extreame or great necessitie. So our Sauour Christ himselfe Math:

5. 42. *Giue to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turne thou not away.* and Luk.

11. 41. *Giue almes of such things as you haue.* Yea

V by

Eph. 4.28.

Luc. 12.33.

Act. 4.34

Sect. 3.

That our riches are not our own but Gods talents committed vnto vs as his stewards.

Heb. 13.16.

by our labours get somewhat to giue vnto our poore brethren, whereby they may be releiued in their necessitie. and if we haue no superfluitie, we are charged (if their wants be extream) to sell our goods and possessions, that we may haue to giue vnto them. Luc. 12.33. as we see it also practised in the primitive Church. Act. 4.34.

All which testimonies clearly proue that we are bound by Gods commandement to giue almes; and therefore it is not left at our owne choice, but to be performed, not only as an act of mercy, but also of righteousnesse, as it may more plainly appeare by these reasons. First, because our riches are not absolutely our owne but Gods talents, which he hath committed vnto vs not to mispend them in the satisfying of our worldly and carnall lusts, but to imploy them to the best aduantage, for the honour of our master and the good of our fellow-seruants. Now God is honoured when as we bestow the wealth which he hath committed vnto vs according to his appointment and commandement; and when as by them (as much as in vs lyeth) wee aduance the meanes of his worship and seruice, whereof one principall part is the relieuing of the poore, for these as the Apostle telleth vs, are such *christian sacrifices, wherewith he is well pleased*. And finally, when as by our christian cariage in this behalfe, we manifest his wisdom, goodness, loue and prouidence in the government of his Church, which is his house and familie. For it is the honour of a good Master, when by his care and prouidence the

the house is so well gouerned, that euery officer performeth his dutie in his place, and all in the familie haue foode conuenient with all other necessities belonging to them. To which purpose our great Lord and Master hath preferred some to be his stewards, vnto whom he hath committed his goods, not that they should appropriate them to their owne vse, but that they should wisely, iustly, and charitably, dispense and dispose of them for the good of all the household; and howsoever by vertue of their high place and office they may take vnto themselves (as it were) a double portion, and that which is sufficient not only for nature, but for the due maintenance of their person; and not for necessitie alone, but also for their honest delight (vnles it be that this their allowance be necessarily to be shortned to supply the extreame necessitie of others who need their helpe) yet their Lord and Master requireth of them, that they communicate so much of their goods as they can well spare from these uses, to relieue and sustaine others of their fellow-seruants, who want such things as are needfull for their releife and maintenance; which who so neglect, and either riotously spending and wasting, or niggardly and miser-like keeping and hoarding vp these goods, doe suffer the poore to starue for want of necessities, they doe herein exceedingly dishonour God, when those who are without see the seruants of his familie perish for want of foode; and they ouerthrow (as much as in them lyeth) his prouidence, whilst they withdraw

that prouision which he hath allotted to the maintenance of his houlhold from these vses and convert them to their owne.

Sect. 4.
That they who
will not releiue
the poore are
guilty of theft
sacrilledge and
murther.

Finally, they greiuously offēd his diuine maiestie by committing those three fearefull & haynous sins of theft, sacrilledge and murther. For they play the theeues, who hauing receiued much riches from God to this end, that they should cōmunicate them for the reliefe of others, do appropriate thē to their own vse. For as the steward of a Noble-mans house receiuing great summes yearly of his Lord to this end, that he should disburse and lay it out for the keeping of his house and maintenance of his familie; should therewith buy and purchase lands for himselfe, or prodigally mispend them in banquetting and belly-cheare, gaming and reuelling, gorgeous apparell or sumptuous furniture, and in the meane time suffer his fellow-seruants to starue and perish for want of foode and apparell: or as the Kings Almner should thus mispend the money and treasure entrusted vnto him for the vse of the poore, they would be counted no better than theeues amongst men: so if they who being placed in these offices by God doe mispend his rich talents after the same maner, they shall one day be arraigned as notorious theeues before his iudgement seate, and receiue the sentence of condemnation, for robbing both their maister and their fellow-seruants. Yea they commit not only theft but also sacrilledge; for that which we are commanded to giue vnto the poore is consecrated

crated to Gods seruice, and is in some sort a part of that portion which belongeth vnto him, whereof it is that almes-deeds are called by the name of sacrificēs which were alone to be offered vnto God; and therefore seeing the Lord hath allotted this part of his portion for the vse of the poore, it is not only theft against them, but sacriledge against God himselfe to rob and spoyle them of it. Finally, if detayning from the poore that due releife which belongeth vnto them, they suffer them to perish in their wants, they do stand guilty before God, not only of theft and sacriledge, but also of the sinne of murther, because they deprive them of the meanes whereby their liues might haue bene preserued, according to that, Eccli. 34. 21. *The bread of the needie is their* Eccli. 34. 21.
life, he that defraudeth him thereof is a man of blood. For whereas in the sixt commandement God forbiddeth murther, he forbiddeth also the neglect of the meanes whereby the life of our neighbour might bee preserued and susteyned. In which regard *Ambrose* doubteth not to say, *Si non paup̄i, occidisti. Thou hast killed the poore, if thou hast not fed them.* And againe; *This is to kill* Hoc est occidere
a man, when we deny vnto him the meanes of pres- humanum vita
uing his life. For he is alike the cause of the falling sua et subsidia
of a staffe who pulleth away his hand which held denegare. Amb.
in Psal. 118.
it vp, and he who taketh and casteth it downe :
and he is the cause why the fire goeth out, that
with-draweth the fuell which should nourish it,
as well as he who casteth water vpon it. And
therefore (as he inferreth) *take heede that thou doeſt*

not include in thy bagges the health and safety of thy neighbour, and as it were bury in the graue, the life of the poore.

Sec. 6.
That God hath
allotted all wee
can spare to
the poore as
their portion.

Secondly, it is not onely an act of mercy but also of iustice to giue almes to the poore, because the Lord, who is the cheife owner of our goods, hauing appointed all that wee can spare to their vse, it is not our owne, but their portion allotted vnto them; which they haue as good right vnto as we haue to the rest, because it is ratified vnto them by the same authoritie. For if wee haue right to the maine estate because God in his bounty hath giuen it vnto vs, then they haue right also to the ouerplus which wee may well spare by vertue of the same donation. Onely here is the difference that God hath giuen vnto vs our riches immediately himselfe, but vnto the poore mediately by vs, whom he hath inioyned to performe vnto them these duties of mercie and Christian charity. In which regard as it is theft in vs to rob them of that portion which God hath allotted vnto them, so it is theft in the poore to take it from the rich without their consent, seeing they haue the right of disposing them from God; euen as it is theft in the inferiour seruants, if when the steward neglecteth his dutie in feeding and prouiding for them, they take vpon them to be their owne caruers; for as it is the will of the Master that he should feede them, so also that they should be fed by him, and not forcibly take it from him by fraud or violence. To this purpose one saith, *it is the bread of the hungrie which mouldeth*

the poore man.
the poore man.

mouldeth in thy bing or cupboard; it is the coate of the naked which hangeth uselesse in thy chamber or wardrobe, they are the shooes of him that goeth barefoote, which lye rotting by thee; it is the siluer of the needy which rusteth in thy chests, and so many thou dost in- iure, as thou canst, and dost not releue in their wants and miseries. And another saith, that it is alike faultie and blameworthy to take from the right owners, & to denie necessities to the poore when wee haue abundance. And therefore know that thou spoylest so many of their goods, as thou deniest releife vnto, when thou art able to giue it. In which regard the Apostle James speaketh thus vnto rich men who neglect this duty, *Iam. 5. 1. Go to now yee rich men, weepe and howle, for your miseries that shall come vpon you. 2. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments moath- eaten: your gold and siluer is cankerd, and the rust of them shall be a witnesse against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire; you haue heaped treasure together for the last daies. And the wise man speaking of almes, maketh it a matter of dutie and not of meere beneuolence, Pro. 3. 27. withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to doe it. And this is implied by the name *Stagnum* that the Apostle vseth to signifie almes, and *Stagnum* to signifie those that giue them, which doe not import a meere gift out of free choyse, but a ministration and seruice, which we are required to doe vnto those of the same fam- ily, who neede our helpe, at the appointment of our great Lord and Master.*

So that here is met with one speciall obiection of

Set 6
Their obiection

on answered,
who say their
goods are their
owne; so that
they need not
to giue except
they list.

of worldly men, whereby they excuse their not giuing of almes when they are pressed vnto them; namely that their goods are their owne & therefore they are not tyed to imploy them in such vses, but haue free libertie to dispose them at their pleasure; seeing they are not absolutely their owne, but the Lord, who is chiefe owner of them, hath onely entrusted these talents vnto them as his seruants & stewards, not giuing them full authority to dispose them at their pleasure, but hath limited them to those vses which hee hath appointed and determined; of which this is one of the chiefe that they giue some chiefe portion of them to the reliefe of the poore. According to that of the Apostle. 1. Pet. 4. 10. *As euery man hath receiued the gift, euen so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.* And so our Sauour hauing exhorted vs to make vs friends of the vnrighteous Mammon, addeth, *And if ye haue not bene faithfull in that which is another mans, who shall giue you that which is your owne?* plainly intimating that the riches which we possesse are not our owne but Gods, and only intrusted vnto our disposing as stewards of his familie. As stewards (I say) to dispence and lay them out, and not as treasurers to lay them vp, and hould them in our chests; or if as treasurers, yet not to reserue them for our owne vse, but for the seruice of our soueraigne and the good of our fellow seruants. And this was typically signified by the gathering of Manna, which though the Lord rained it downe from heauen, and could as easily

1. Pet. 4. 10.
εἰς τὰ ἑκάστην δὲ
τὴν χάριν ἣν ἔλαβον
735.

Luc. 16. 12.

easily haue doubled the quantitie tenne fold, if so it had pleased him, yet hee would not allow that those who had gathered much should keepe and hould vp their superfluitie, but enioyned them to communicate of their greater store to them who had gathered lesse. The which the Apostle applyeth to the giuing of almes out of our abundance to those that want, 2. Cor. 8. 14. *That now* ^{2. Cor. 8. 14.} *at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance might be a supply for your want, that there be equalitie, as it is written, He that gathered much had nothing ouer, and he that gathered little had no lacke.* Neither are we to thinke that God hath caused this inequality of estate amongst men, because he respecteth the rich and neglecteth the poore; & would haue them pampered with all superfluities and delitious dainties, and the other starued with want and penurie; but hereby he would exercise the diuers graces which he hath giuen to his Church and people; as namely the charity, liberalitie and fidelitie of the rich in dispensing of his talents, and the faith, affiance and patience of the poore; that being approued both might bee crowned at the day of Christs appearing, according to that of Basil; *why* (saith he) *doest thou abound with riches, and he want necessities? surely that thou mightest receiue the reward of thy faithfull dispensation, and he also after many conflicts and victories might haue the reward* ^{Curtis diuitias circumspiciat, cur ille eger? &c. Basil. Orat. 14. de diuit. & pauper.} *and crowne of his patience.* And also he would hereby giue occasion vnto humane societies of lincking themselves more neerely and firmly together

That almesdeeds are an act of righteousness. CHAP. 15.
ther by naturall offices of giuing and receiuing,
labouring and rewarding.

Sec. 7.
That as stew-
ards we shall
bee called to an
account.

Luc. 16. 2.

Matth. 25. 21.
and 24. 45. 46.

But if this argument of their right and our possession, as stewards, & not as absolute Lords, will not perswade vs to communicate to their necessities; yet let this consideration preuaile with vs, that a day will come, when as like stewards, we shall be called to a reckoning; and bee forced whether we will or no to giue an account before God, his Saints and blessed Angels, how we haue carried our selues in our stewardship, and increased our Lords talents. According to that of our Sauour, Luc. 16. 2. *Giue an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayst be no longer steward.* And if we haue encreased and doubled them, by deliuering them to these bankers, the poore members of Iesus Christ; then shall we heare that comfortable sentence pronounced by our Lord, *Well done thou good and faithfull seruant, thou hast beene faithfull ouer a few things, I will make thee ruler ouer many things, enter thou into the ioy of thy Lord.* Matth. 25. 21. But if contrariwise we neglect those charitable vses which our Lord hath enioyned vs, and neglecting the poore, do spend our masters goods in excessse and ryot; if then in steed of feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, wee bring in account, so much spent in dainty faire and gorgeous apparell, so much in stately buildings and costly furniture, so much in rich iewels and needelesse vanities, so much layd out on hounds, horses and harlots, so much consumed in gaming and reueling, in plaies and enterludes, so much spent in needlesse

needlesse suites of law, ingiuing bribes, and entertaining rich friends, and in a word, so much prodigally wasted in the pleasures of sinne and voluptuous delights, or so much miser-like hoorded vp and hid in a napkin : then shall wee heare that tearefull sentence which will make our harts to ake, and our ioynts to tremble. *Thou wicked & slothfull seruant, thou knowest that I reape where I sowed not, and gather where I haue not strawed ; thou oughtest therefore to haue put my money to the exchangers, and then at my comming I should haue receiued mine owne with aduantage. Take therefore the talent from him, and giue it vnto him that hath two talents. And cast yee the vnprouisable seruant into outer darknesse, there shall bee weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Matt. 25. 16. 27

The third reason to moue vs to giue almes as being an act of righteousness, and Christian equitie may be taken from that communion which is between the poore and vs, with our head Christ ; for this is equall and iust, that they who are vnited together in the neereft communion of persons should also communicate in the vse of their goods, for their mutuall releefe and comfort ; whereof it is that almesdeedes are called *κοινωνία*, that is, such gifts as arise out of communion, by a metonymie of the cause inducing, for the effect which is produced by it. But the neereft communion that can bee imagined is betweene Christians, one with another, and all of them with their head Iesus Christ. For besides the ciuill communion between all men, whereby they are al of one flesh (which the Prophet *Esay* thinketh a

Sec. 8.
That the communion between vs and the poore, should moue vs to releefe them.

Rom. 15. 18.
2. Cor. 8. 4. and 9. 13.

Eſay 58.

Acts 17.19.

ſufficient argument to mooue vs to doe theſe workes of mercie in releeuing the poore) the offspring and generation of God, as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, the ſonnes of the ſame *Adam* and *Noah*, and ſo brethren one with another, and of the ſame countrie and common wealth, yea, it may bee of the ſame citie and corporation; there are many ſpirituall reſpects, and more diuine relations, which make a more neere communion betweene Chriſtians one with another. For we are elected to the ſame eternall happineſſe; and who would not loue and releiue thoſe who haue communion in the ſame decree of life and bleſſedneſſe? we are Gods worke-man-ſhip, who are not only created in *Adam*, according to his glorious image, but re-created and reſtored vnto this diuine image loſt by *Adam*, in the ſecond *Adam* Ieſus Chriſt? & who would not cheriſh thoſe who haue ſuch ſpirituall reſemblance and likenes with God and one another? For if (as one ſaith) Idolaters ſo much reuerence the inſenſible image of their Idoll-gods, that they willingly beſtow vpon them the moſt precious things they haue, of which notwithstanding they haue no uſe, and cannot ſo much as giue thanks vnto them for all the oblations which they haue received: how much more iuſt and equall is it to reſpect and cheriſh the liuing images of Almighty God, that thou mayeſt bee thought worthy to finde him who euer liueth, eſpecially, ſeeing they can uſe what they haue received, and giue vnto thee thanks, and God alſo in whole ſight thou doeſt theſe

*Caſſian de ver.
Cultu. Sc. 13.*

these good deedes will approoue them, and pay vnto thee the wages of thy pietie? we are redeemed in our soules and bodies with the same precious blood of Iesus Christ, and therefore why should wee make question of giuing a poore alms for the preservation of their bodies, seeing our Saviour hath giuen such an inestimable price for their redemption? wee are partakers of the same calling, whereby wee are called out of the world, and gathered into the Church and Communion of Saints, yea, of Iesus Christ our Lord; out of darknesse into his maruellous light, that wee may inherite the blessing of eternall glory, and out of a desperate condition, to bee partakers of the same precious promises. And by vertue of this calling, we serue one & the same God, be of one Church and Family, and haue one Religion, one Faith, one Baptisme; and why then should wee thinke it much to communicate vnto the poore, earthly trifles, for whom God hath provided heauenly happinesse? why should wee not doe for those who are of the same family with vs, and grudge to giue vnto Gods seruants such things as we would be ashamed to denie vnto the meanest of our owne? why should they not haue fellowship with vs in our houses at our owne table, who haue communion with vs in Gods house, and are inuited guests to his table, as well as our selues? we are brethren of the same father, and co-heires of the same heauenly kingdome; and therefore let vs take care of those who are so neere of kinne vnto vs, and not cast them off, as though we had

*1. Cor. 1. 9.
1. Pet. 2. 9. & 3.
9 & 5. 10.
Ephes 4. 5.*

X 3 nothing

nothing to doe with them ; for it is the voyce of Cain to say, *Am I my brothers keeper ?* and seeing God hath thought them worthy to raigne with vs in heauen, let not vs thinke them vnworthy to liue with vs on the earth ; if he vouchsafe to giue them with vs a glorious and euerlasting kingdome, let not vs looke vpon their present vile and contemptible condition, vnlesse it be to pittie and releue them, seeing they shall bee aduanced with vs, if not before vs ; nor refuse to make them partakers with vs of these earthly and contemptible trifles, which are small in woorth, and momentanie in continuance. For this the Apostle *James* condemneth for such an hainous sinne as shall procure iudgement without mercy. *Iam. 2. 5. Hearken my beloued brethren, hath not God chosen the poore of this world, rich in faith and heires of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to thē that loue him? but yee haue despised the poore. And what followeth? He shall haue iudgement without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.* And this *Austin* noteth, as moit vnseemly and vnequall, that among men professing Christianity, and vnder the government of the same Lord, some should be pampered and drunken with excesse, and others should be tormented and perish with hunger. Wee are all the seruants of one, and redeemed with one price, all hauing alike ingresse and egressse into, and out of the world ; and if we doe well, wee shall all come to the same blessednesse. And why then doth not the poore now eat with thee, who shall hereafter raigne with thee ? why doest thou not permit him

Iam. 2. 5.

*August. De
Tempore Sermon.
2. 6. 10.*

him to put on thine old and cast clothing, who is to receiue with thee the robe of immortality ? why is he not thought worthy to eat thy bread, whom God hath thought worthy to receiue the Sacrament of Baptisme ? and why deemeft thou him vnworthy to eate the reliques of thy meate, whom God hath enuited to feast with the blessed Saints and Angels ? Finally, wee are the same spouse, of the same heauenly Bride-goom, and members of the same mysticall body, the head whereof is Iesus Christ ; and therefore if the limbs of Sathan will not (being combined one to another in an hellish friendship) denie to doe these small trifles one for another ; much lesse let vs who are knit together in this spirituall and holy vnion ; seeing if wee doe good to our fellow-members, the benefit must needes redound vnto our selues, who are of the same body, euen as the hand giuing nourishment to the mouth, and the mouth preparing it for the stomacke, doe in nourishing it provide nourishment for themselves ?

1. Cor. 12. 13.

13. 14.

The second bond which bindeth vs to this duty, is the communion which the poore, together with vs, haue with our head Christ ; which is so neere and indissoluable, that our Sauiour esteemeth that as done vnto himselfe, which is done vnto them ; euen as the head acknowledgeth the benefit done vnto it which the meanest member of the body immediately receiueth. Yea in truth that is much more acceptable which we doe for his poore members, than if we should do it to his

Sect. 9.

That our communion with our head Christ should moue vs to releue the poore.

owne.

owne person, as being a signe of greater loue; for it is but an ordinarie kindnes to conferre benefits vpon our dearest freinds, but to extend our bountie to the poorest and meanest that belong vnto them is a signe of much greater loue. For if for their sakes only we do good vnto these, how much more would we be ready to doe it vnto them-selues if they had occasion to craue our helpe? And as in this regard he much esteemeth this christian bountie, so also he will richly reward it at the day of iudgement; for then these mercifull men who haue releiued the poore for Christs sake, shall with ravishing ioy heare that sentence, *Come yee blessed of my Father*; because the workes of mercy which they haue done to the poore, Christ will acknowledge as done vnto him-selfe. Now what can bee a more forcible reason to make our hearts relent though they be neuer so stonie, and our bowells to earne with pittie and compassion towards the poore, though they were of brasse and yron, than to consider that our deare Lord and Sauour in them doth craue releife? For who is so more than brutishly ingratefull; that can turne him away emptie-handed, who being infinitely rich in all glory and happinesse, was content for our sakes to become poore, that by his pouertie he might communicate vnto vs his heauenly riches? Who would not giue Christ lodging, yea euen (if neede should require) the vse of his owne bed, if he remember that he was content so farre to abase himselfe for our sakes, as to make a stable his chamber, and a manger

Math: 25. 40.

1 Cor. 8. 9.

manger his lodging? Who could deny to clothe him being naked, who hath clothed our nakednes and couered our filthinesse with the precious robe of his righteousness, in which we stand accepted before God and receiue the blessing of eternall happinesse? Who would not spare food out of his owne belly to releiue poore Christ, who hath giuen vnto vs his blessed body to be our meate, and his precious blood to bee our drinke, whereby our soules and bodies are nourished vnto euerlasting life? Who would not leaue all pleasure and profit to goe and visit him in his sicknes and imprisonment, that came to visit and redeeme vs with the inestimable price of himself, when we were intralld in the miserable bondage of sinne, sathan, hell and condemnation? and to set vs free in that glorious libertie of the sonnes of God, was content to be himselfe apprehended like a malefactor, imprisoned, arraigned, accused, blasphemed, and rayled at, buffeted, spit vpon, whipped, crowned with thornes, condemned to death, and crucified betweene two theeues? Neither let vs excuse our hardnes of heart in denying releefe to the poore, by saying, that though wee reject them, yet we would if Christ were in their place shew all loue vnto him, seeing this is but to couer our rockie obduratenes, with the filthy vaile of impious infidelitie. For Christ in his word hath plainly told vs, that what we doe to his brethren and poore members, he doth esteeme as done vnto himselfe; and therefore if thou still refuse to releue the poore, either

Y

confesse

Math. 25. 40.
45.

confesse thy infidelitie which will not let thee beleeue him; or thy hardnes of heart which will not suffer thee to releue and comfort him.

Seck. 10.
What we giue
to the poore is
giuen to God
himselſe.
Pro. 19. 17.

Lastly, it is a iust and righteous action to giue vnto the poore, seeing in giuing vnto them, we giue vnto God himselſe; for as the Wise-man speaketh, *He that hath pity on the poore, lendeth vnto the Lord*, Pro. 19. 17. Now what can be more equall and iust than to giue a little vnto him, who hath giuen all vnto vs? especially seeing he hath granted vnto vs the vse only of that we possesse, reseruing still the chiefe proprietie vnto himselſe? and to spare something vnto the poore out of our abundance at his request, who hath not spared to giue vnto vs his onely begotten and dearly beloued Sonne, that by a shamefull death he might free vs from euerlasting death & condemnation, and purchase for vs eternall happinesse? yea in truth, what madnes is it to deny, being requested, to giue at his appointment, some small portion of our goods, who by his owne right and authoritie may take all? and what senseles folly were it to turne away our face from him when he asketh in the behalfe of the poore some earthly and momentany trifles, from whom we expect as his free gift heauenly happinesse and euerlasting glory? *Christ* (saith Augustine) *thus speaketh vnto thee.*

Giue me something of that which I haue giuen vnto thee. I aske but mine owne, and wilt thou not giue it? Giue and I will restore; thou hast found me a free giuer, and now make me to become thy debter.

*Da mich deo
quod dedi tibi.
Deus inquit,
et michi non de-
nas? da & re-
do. Habuisti me
largiorem, facito
debitorum.
Aug. de verbis
domini.*

CHAP.

CHAP. 16.

*That in the workes of mercy wee resemble God,
please him, and make our calling and election
sure.*

AND so I come frō the reason included in the name of righteousness, here giuen to almes, to those maine arguments whereby the Psalmist enforceth this dutie which are plainly expressed in the text. The first whereof is the lasting benefit wherewith these workes of mercy shall be rewarded, in these words; *his righteousness endureth for euer*. Where two things are to be considered; first the benefit or priuiledge promised to the mercifull man, the which is the fruit and profit of his beneficence. And the second is the time how long this benefit and fruit of his good deeds shall last, that is not only in this life, but also in the life to come; for *his righteousness*, or the fruit of his mercy towards the poore, *endureth for euer*. The benefits which accompany these workes of mercy are inestimable and innumerable; for first the inward habite of goodnes and mercy in our hearts, exercised in the outward actions of liberalitie and bountie by our hands, doth make vs to resemble God himselfe, and that in such an attribute as he delighteth in aboue others to stile himself withall. For howsoeuer he is infinite in glory, greatnesse, iustice, power, and all perfections, yet most visually

Sc. 1.

That we re-
semble God in
these workes of
mercy

Exod. 34. 6.

in the Scriptures he is called a *God of mercy and compassion*. And hereby principally he made himselfe knowne vnto Moses desiring to see him. Exod: 34. 6. *The Lord, the Lord God, mercifull and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodnes and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sinne &c.* So in the Scriptures, though his workes be described to be most excellent, incomprehensible & past finding out; yet his mercies are said to be aboue them all. And therefore seeing mercy and goodnesse doe make vs aboue all other graces to resemble God, and then the creature attaineth to greatest perfection and blessednes, when he is likest and cometh neereſt vnto the excellencie of his Creator; And seeing we professe our selues to be children of our gracious and glorious God, and we can no way grace our selues so much, as by resembling our heavenly father in those Attribures wherein he most shineth and excelleth, and nothing maketh vs more like him than mercy and compassion; let vs hearken vnto our Sauours exhortation, *and be mercifull as our heavenly Father is mercifull.* Luk. 6. 36.

Luk. 6. 36.

Sect 2.

That the works
of mercy please
God and make
vs accepted of
him.

Secondly, nothing maketh vs more pleasing and acceptable vnto God then this inward goodnesse outwardly exercised in the workes of mercy and compassion. And this must needs follow vpon the other; for the more like we are vnto God, the more hee liketh vs; and the neerer we approach vnto him in his perfections, the better he loueth and approueth vs; it being the nature of
loue

loue to arise from likenesse betweene them that loue and those that are beloued. And therefore

God being infinitely gracious and mercifull, best liketh those who shine brightest in his own beautie, and best loueth those children, which most resembling their heauenly Father, doe approoue themselves to be legitimate. And this appeareth by the Scriptures, where God so highly prizeth and esteemeth mercie, and the workes wherein it is exercised towards the poore, that he preferreth them before the outward act of religious duties. Hof. 6. 6. *I desired mercie and not sacrifice.* This

Fructus sic laboris placere melioribus Symachi.

Hof. 6. 6.

is the oblation which he chiefly requireth, *where- Eleemosyna est non tantum pro sacrificio, sed pro sacrificio.*

withall (saith the Hypocrite) *shall I come before God, and bow my selfe before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt offrings, with calves of a yeare old? will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rammes, or with ten thousands of riuers of oyle? shall I giue my first borne for my transgressions, and the fruite of my body for the sinne of my soule? No none of all these saith the Prophet, but if thou wouldst be accepted of God, I will tell thee what he requir- Mich. 6. 6. 8.*

eth of mee; to doe iustly and to loue mercie, and to walke humbly with thy God. Mich. 6. 6. 8. This hee

esteemeth the most acceptable sacrifice. *To doe good and communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.* Heb. 13. 16. This is the fast

Heb. 13. 16.

that he delighteth in, *to deale thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poore that are cast out into thy house; when thou seest the naked, that thou couer him; and that thou hide not thy selfe from thine owne flesh.* Esa. 58. 6. 7. This is pure religion and un-

Esa. 58. 6. 7.

defiled

Iam. 1. 27.

Phil. 4. 18.

Luk. 11. 41.

defiled before God, to visite the fatherlesse and wid-
dowes in their affliction, and to keepe himselfe unspot-
ted of the world. Iam. 1. 27. Finally these almes-
deedes and workes of mercy are not only an odour
of a sweete smell, & a sacrifice acceptable & well-plea-
sing vnto God, as the Apostle speaketh. Phil. 4. 18.
but also such an oblation, as if we offer vnto God
with a liuely faith, the vse of Gods creatures shall
become cleane vnto vs, according to that of our
Saviour, Luc. 11. 41. *Giue almes of such things as
you haue, and behold all things are cleane vnto you.*
Not that almes satisfie for our former sinnes as the
Papists inferre out of this place, and so make all
things cleane vnto vs; but only hereby thus much
is signified, that if wee giue almes out of a liuely
faith all things are cleane without Iewish and
Pharisaicall washings, inuented by them for the
purifying of Gods creatures, of which the text
specially speaketh.

Sect. 7.

That by these
workes of mer-
cy wee make
our calling &
election sure.

1. Pet. 1. 7. 8.

Col. 3. 12.

Thirdly, by these workes of mercy we make our
calling and election sure, for if we doe these thinges,
that is, adde to our knowledge, brotherly kindnesse,
and to brotherly kindnesse charity, and so abounding
in these graces, be neither barren nor unfruitfull in
the knowledge of our Lord Iesus Christ, we shall neuer
fall. 2. Pet. 1. 7. 8. 10. and this the Apostle Paul
maketh an infallible note of our election. Col.
3. 12. *Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloued,
the bowels of mercie and kindnesse &c.* And as these
workes of mercy are vndoubted markes of our er-
lection, so also of all the inferiour meanes where-
by it is effected; as first of sauing knowledge and
spirituall

spirituall wisdome; for the *wisdome that is from above is full of mercie and good fruits.* Iam. 3. 17.

Secondly, of vnfaigned repentance and our sound conuersion, whereof it is that *Daniel* counselleth *Nebuchadnezzar* to approue his repentance and conuersion vnto God by these speciall fruites. *Wherefore* (saith he) *O King let my counsell be accepted vnto thee, and breake off thy sinnes by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercie to the poore.* Dan. 4. 27. The which *Zachaeus* practised, Dan. 4. 27.

for no sooner was he conuerted vnto God, but to testifie his vnfaigned repentance, hee giueth halfe Luc. 19. 8.

of his goods vnto the poore. Thirdly, they are infallible signes of a liuely faith, whereby we may approue it vnto men, because they are those good fruits which spring from it, according to that Iam. 2. 18. *Shew me thy faith by thy workes, and I will shew thee my faith by my workes.* Which fruits if our faith beare not, it is dead, and not a liuing body, but a carcase that breatheth not. vers. 26.

For if we be truely assured of Gods loue towards vs, we will vndoubtedly loue him againe; and if wee loue him vnfaignedly, wee will also loue our neighbours for his sake, and be readie to shew all duties of loue to all those that need our helpe. So also they are in this regard signes of a liuely faith, seeing thereby we apprehend Gods promises, & so are encouraged to doe these workes of mercie for his sake; for no man easily parteth with his worldly goods to these vses, vlesse by faith he be assured that he shal haue in lue of them heavenly and euermlasting treasures. Fourthly, they are vndoubted

vndoubted signes of our loue towards God, whenas we so loue the poore for his sake, as that we be content to spare somewhat euen from our owne backes and bellies, that wee may the more liberally communicate vnto their necessities. And as our almes are a signe of our loue to God, so the quantitie of our almes (respect being had to the proportion of our state) is a signe of the quantity of our loue ; for he loueth but little, that hauing much, giueth but little, and contrariwise his hart is inflamed with feruent loue, who hath it enlarged with bountie towards his poore brethren; the extension of our loue towards them, being the true touchstone of the intention of our loue towards God. And as a great tree, with many and large branches are an vndoubted signe of a roote proportionable in greatnesse; and a small shrub about the ground, plainly proueth that the roote also is small which is vnder it; so is it with our loue and almes-deedes which spring from it; for if we be bountifull in almes, wee are plentiful in loue, if we be slacke in giuing, wee are cold in louing; but if we be vterly defectiue in bringing forth these excellent fruites, then it is a manifest signe that this grace of Gods loue is not rooted in vs.

2. Ioh. 3. 17.

For if any man haue these worlds goods, and seeth his brother haue need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the loue of God in him? And as they are manifest signes of our loue towards God, so also of our loue towards our neighbours, when as wee carry our selues in all Christian bounty towards them, as vnto children
of

of the same father, and members of the same body, suffering with them in their wants, through compassion and fellow-feeling, and reioycing with them in their fulnesse and prosperity. And as they are plaine demonstrations of our faith and loue, so also direct proofes of their sincerity and truth, and that they are not hypocriticall and counterfet. In which regard the Apostle *Paul* bringeth the Corinthians to this touchstone of almesdeedes, *to prooue the sinceritie of their loue.* 2. Cor. 8. 8. And againe verse 24. *Shew yee to them, and before the Churches the prooffe of your loue.* 2. Cor. 8. 24. And the Apostle *James* also plainely affirmeth, that it is but an vnprofitable and hypocritical loue, to make shew of kindnesse and compassion in word, and to performe nothing in deede. *Iam.* 2. 15. Fifthly, these almesdeedes are notable signes whereby we may bee comfortably assured of the remission of our sinnes. For though they bee not causes of pardon, by satisfying Gods iustice (as the Papists absurdly teach) yet are they testimonies vnto vs, that they are pardoned; for our mercy towards the poore ariseth from the assurance which wee first haue of Gods mercy towards vs; & as our giuing much to Christs poore members for his sake, doth shew that wee loue much (for if wee doe this to the feete, how much more would we doe it to our head himselfe?) so our louing much is an infallible signe that many sinnes are forgien vs, as our Sauour speaketh to the woman, *Luk.* 7. 27. Lastly, by these almesdeedes and workes of mercy, we may be assured that we

2. Cor. 8. 8. 24.

Iam. 2. 15.

Luk. 7. 47.

are godly and blessed men, sound Christians, and true citizens of the heauenly Ierusalem; for heere in this Psalm it is made a note and propertie of a blessed & good man (not as the world speakes, to haue goods in possession, for *Dives* in the Parable was such a good man, and yet afterwards cast into hell) but to do good by giuing to the poore, & releecing the poore members of Iesus Christ, according to that Prou. 14. 21. *Hee that hath mercie on the poore, happy is hee.* And without the doing of these works of mercy, wee can haue no assurance, that we are now good men, and subiects of the kingdome of grace, or shall heereafter be citizens of heauen. For how can there be any goodnesse in vs, and wee not exercize it in doing good vnto others? how are we subiects of Gods Kingdome, if wee will not yelde him obedience in one of his cheife commandements? how are we strangers here, and citizens of the new Ierusalem, if we minde only worldly wealth, and haue our hearts fast nailed to the earth? how can wee be the seruants of Christ, and continue still vassals vnto the earthly Mammon, not parting with the least part of it, to approue our loue vnto him? Finally, how hath Christ our heart, if it still remaine fastened to riches? or how is heauen our cuntry, when as we will send none of our wealth thither before vs?

SECT. 4.
That by these
works of mer-
cie we are assu-
red of our inte-
rest vnto Gods
promises.

The fourth maine argument, to perswade vs with cheerefulnesse, to the exercizing these works of mercie, is because heereby we may be assured of our right and title vnto Gods most gracious promises

promises, the which are either generall or more speciall. Generally, God maketh this promise, *that if we cast our bread upon the face of the waters,* ^{Eccles. 11.1.} *we shall after many daies finde it.* Eccles. 11. 1. and in this text, that if we giue to the poore, *our righteousnesse*, that is, the fruit and benefit of these workes of mercie, *shall remaine for euer.* So our Sauour promiserh that our heavenly father seeing our almesdeedes, which we doe in secret, will reward vs openly, Matth. 6. 4. And lest any should bee discouraged from performing these duties, because he is able to giue but little: our Sauour assureth vs, that, *Whosoever giueth but a cup of colde* ^{Matth. 6. 4.} *water vnto a Disciple, in the name of a Disciple, hee shall in no wise lose his reward.* ^{Matth. 10. 42.} Matth. 10. 42. For this reward is not grounded vpon the excellency and merit of the worke, but vpon Gods righteousnes and truth in fulfilling his promises, according ding to that Heb. 6. 10. *For God is not vnrighteous* ^{Heb. 6. 10.} *to forget your worke and labour of loue, which ye haue shewed towards his name, in that ye haue ministered to the Saints, and doe minister.* Whereby hee implyeth it, that it is no more possible, that those, who in loue and obedience haue exercised themselues in these workes of mercy should lose their reward, then that God himselfe should lose his righteousnesse. And these with such like are the generall [†] promises, in which are comprehended all particular blessings and benefits, respecting this life or the life to come. Besides which there are many speciall promises, which may encourage vs to exercise our selues daily in these workes of mercie.

As first, that whatsoeuer we giue in this kinde, it shall not be lost, but we shall surely haue it restored vnto vs againe. For though there appeareth no more possibilitie of hauing those goods returned vnto vs, then of receiuing the bread which we cast into the sea, yet being thus cast vpon the face of the waters, they are not cast away: for the Holy Ghost assureth vs, that after many dayes, euen when they seem to be so long lost, that they are quite forgotten, then we shall finde them: for so the faithfull are put in minde, by our Sauour Christ, of their workes of mercie, when they seem vterly to haue forgotten them, as appeareth by their question, *When saw we thee an hungrie, and fed thee, or thirstie and gaue thee drinke? &c.* So our Sauour assureth vs, that if wee giue, it shall bee giuen vnto vs againe. Luk. 6. 38. And the Wise-man telleth vs, *That he who hath pittie on the poore, lendeth vnto the Lord, and that which he hath giuen, hee will repay him againe.* Prou. 19. 17. Neither in truth can it be otherwise: for if mercie & bounty be in God, as in an inexhaustible and euer-springing fountaine; and in vs, as in a little streame that floweth from it, how is it possible that our small and shallow riuulet of mercie should flow to our neighbours, and that the euerliuing spring of Gods mercie and goodnesse should bee drie vnto vs? or how should the streame flow, and the fountaine and well-head be dried vp? yea, let vs assure our selues, that we can no faster, in a wise and discrete manner, emptie our selues of these waters of Gods blessings, for the satisfying & quenching
of

Matth. 25. 44.

Luk. 6. 38.

Prou. 19. 17.

Quomodo
quicunque puer
fuerit, ut co-
hant, in puzi-
tate muerit
Prou. 19. 17.

of the poore mans thirst and releiuing of his wants, but we shall againe be replenished from the fountaine of all goodnes; and if like kinde nurses we let these deare children of God sucke the breasts of our bounty for their comfort and nourishment, that which is thus spent will againe be restored; whereas if we churlishly refuse to impart and communicate this milke of Gods blessings, it is the readiest way to haue it quite dried vp.

*etiam clarissio,
qua est bonus
suis benigntatis,
primum silentium
communis,
rursus augetur
et repletur.
Clemens Alexan.
paulag. l. 3. c. 7.*

So that here are answered two obiections of worldly men, which are notable impediments to hinder them from doing these workes of mercy. The first is that their riches bestowed on these good vses are vnto themselues vtterly lost; which argueth such carnall diffidence, that it vtterly mis-beseemeth those who take vpon them the profession of christianitie. For seeing we haue so many gracious and infallible promises from God himselte, that if we giue to others, we shall receiue from him; if we let the streames of our liberalitie water the dry and thirstie lands into which hee would haue them run, they shall againe be replenished from the all-sufficient fountaine of his bounty, why should we restraints and withhold our almes from the poore in the time of neede? or why should we giue vnto them with a strait and niggardly hand? why should we hazard the drying vp of our breasts, which are only replenished from God with his blessings, by refusing to communicate them to the vse of his children, and not let the poore draw them which is the only

*Secl. 8.
Their obiection answered,
who thinke
their riches lost
which are giuen to the
poore.*

Ecclesi. 29. 10.

Terrora omnia

seruandis amittit

vna, laetando

seruamus. 16.

A. 16.

Si frumentum

sema, perditur: Si

seminas restat.

Sedas quas dede-

ra semper habebis

oper. dicit

Glossa in Math.

16. 25.

meanes to preserue their fullnes and plenty? why should wee assuredly lose our riches for feare of losing them; and not rather seeme to lose them, that we may in truth finde them? according to that, Ecclesi. 29. 10. *Lose thy money for thy brother and thy freind, and let it not rust vnder a stone to be lost.* For in truth these earthly things are lost with keeping, and kept with bestowing. For they and we cannot continue long together, seeing either they will leaue vs in our life-time, or we shall leaue them at the houre of death. For then all that we possesse shall be left behinde vs, and that only shall be our owne which we haue sent before vs. In which respect our riches are fitly compared vnto seeede, which can no otherwise be truly kept, than when we seeme vtterly to lose it. For if we keepe it in our graners, it will either be spent in the vse, or in time muste, corrupt, and perish; but if we cast it into the ground, where it seemeth to rott and to be lost, it is the onely way to preserue and keepe it from losing and perishing. And therefore let vs not, by giuing to the poore, feare the losse of our riches, seeing it is the best and safest course to preserue them for our vse; whereas otherwise they cannot be without perill of miscarying. But let this consideration moue vs to giue more freeiy and liberally, imitating herein wise Trauaylors, who being in a strange and dangerous country, will not carry their riches and treasures about them, because they then be in danger by theeues and enemies to be spoyled of them, hazarding also there-with
the

the losse of their liues, but deliver them rather to the Agents and Factors of sufficient Merchants dwelling in their owne country, that so taking from them bills of exchange, they may receiue them at their comming home; so let not vs carry about vs all our wealth and riches whilest we trauaile in our worldly pilgrimage, where we are still in perill to be robbed by theeues and enemies; and though we escape many dangers, yet are sure at last to be spoyled, when death our mortall enemy shall set vpon vs. But let vs put a good part of our goods (euen as much as we can well spare from our owne vse for the well finishing of our iourney) into the hands of the poore, whom God hath appointed as his agents and factors, and so it shall most surely be repayed, when hauing finished our pilgrimage, we shall safely arriue at our heavenly home; and though whilest we are traauayling we haue it not in sight but seeme for the time to be dispossessed of it; yet in the end we shall finde that it was not lost, but sent before vs, and that it only remaineth for our vse and benefit, when death hath spoyled vs of all the rest. And this is the right course to make vs friends of the *unrighteous Mammon*, vnto which our Sauour perswadeth vs, Luk. 16. 9. This is to play the wise stewards, that when by death we are thrust out of our stewardship, we hauing discretely laid out our masters goods may be ioyfully receiued into those euerlasting habitations.

Luk. 16. 9.

The other obiection is, that if we be so liberall

Sect. 6.

Their obiection answered who say that by giuing almes their estates will be consumed, and they brought vnto penurie.

in giuing to the poore, we shall hereby consume our estate, and so our selues be brought into penurie. To which I answer, that we must in this regard order our affaires with christian discretion, and deliuer so much to be sent before vs, as that we our selues doe not want necessities for our honest occasions and the well finishing of our iourney, which being obserued there is no cause why we should feare pouertie by releiuing the poore. The wise husbandman doth not cast all his seede into the ground, but reserueth so much at least as will be sufficient to maintaine his familie; and so we must sow not all we haue, but all which we can spare, that through our indiscretion we want not foode before the time of haruest. And this is all I desire (saith the couetous miser) but seeing my goods are subiect to many casualties, and I may haue many extraordinarie occasions which may bring me into want, I will not part with much, because I will be sure to leaue sufficient for my selfe. Yea but how will thy hoarding vp of riches preserue thee from these perills, and not rather through Gods iust iudgement expose thee vnto them, because thou disobeyest his commandement, through diffidence and distrust in his prouidence and resting vpon thine owne prouision? Or how canst thou tell when thou hast sufficient to maintaine thee and thy charge? seeing if God doe but blow vpon thy wealth, all, as well as a part, will vanish away and giue thee no warning when it departeth? In which regard how much better were it to vse things present, and to commend

commend our selues and our estates without
 carking and caring vnto God who careth for vs, ^{1 Pet. 5. 7.}
 and is all-sufficient to supply all our wants, ha- ^{Heb. 13. 5.}
 uing so many faithfull promises that he will pro-
 uide for vs and repay vs what in obedience to his
 commandement we lay out, on these charitable
 vses. And this argument the Apostle vseth, to
 perswade the Corinthians to giue liberally to the
 vse of the poore, ^{2 Cor. 9. 8.} *Because God* (saith ^{2 Cor. 9. 8.}
 he) *is able to make all grace abound towards you, that*
you alwaies hauing all sufficiencie in all things may a-
bound to euery good worke. Now he that ministreth
seede to the sower, doth minister bread for your foode,
and multiplyeth your seede sowne, and increaseth the
fruits of your righteousness. Whereby is signified,
 that he who inableth vs to giue vnto the poore,
 is as able to provide things necessary and com-
 fortable for our vse in this life present, and so to
 blesse our seeds of beneficence, which we haue
 sowne by his direction and appointment, as that
 wee may reape a fruitfull haruest in the life to
 come. And as he is able so wee shall finde him
 willing; neither are we to imagine that if we be
 carefull in feeding Christ, that he will be carelesse
 in feeding vs; that hee will deny vs meate who
 hath giuen vs his precious blood; that he will suf-
 fer vs to want earthly trifles, who hath provided
 for vs heauenly riches. Let such more than hea-
 thenish diffidence be farre from vs who professe
 our selues to be of the household of faith, and if we
 will be thought worthy the name of Christians,
 let vs not so much distrust the promises of Christ.

1 Sam. 2. 7.

As therefore no husbandman refuseth to sow his seede in due season for feare of want, but lest he should want will therfore sowe it; so let not feare of pouertie make vs poore in these works of mercy, but let vs sowe our almes-deeds with a plentiful hand in assured hope of fruitfull increase. For by whose prouidence and prouision doe we liue and are we maintayned? Is it our owne, and not rather Gods, whose power ruleth ouer all, and whose eye neuer sleepeth? Is it not he who giueth vs all things to enioy; and preserueth the things giuen, when they are exposed to innumerable perills? Is it not he (as Hannah speaketh) *that maketh poore and maketh rich, that bringeth low and lifteth up, and raising the poore from the dust and dunghill, doth set them among Princes, and maketh them to inherit the throne of glory?* Doe we enioy all things through Gods blessing; and can we thinke to keep our riches by disobeying his commandement? Are the goods we posses our owne absolutely, and not Gods talents which he hath entrusted vnto vs, as his stewards, to be disposed according to his appointment, and do we thinke to be continued in our office of administration, when like theeeues we convert them wholly to our owne vse; and not rather by imploying and disposing them, as he hath commanded vs, to the glory of our Lord and Master, and good of our fellow-seruants?

CHAP. I 7.

*That what we giue to the poore we shall receiue
again with great increase.*

BY that which hath beene said, it appeareth,
that by giuing almes we shall be no losers,
seeing God will repay what is thus laid out. Now
let this consideration further induce vs to the per-
formance of this dutie, that we shall not only re-
ceiue our owne againe, but with great increase,
according to that Luk. 6. 38. *Giue and it shall be gi-*
uen vnto you, good measure, pressed downe, and shaken
together, and running ouer shall men giue into your
bosome. And the Wiseman telleth vs, that if we
will thus *honour the Lord with our substance, our*
barnes shall be filled with plenty, and our presses shall
burst out with new wine. Pro. 3. 9. 10. And if wee
thus scatter the seeds of our beneficence, they shal
be the more increased; whereas if contrariwise
we with-hold more than is meete, it is the ready
way to bring vs to pouertie, as it is, Pro: 11. 24. And
hereof it is that almes-giuing is compared
to sowing of seede: so in my Text the Psalmist
saith, that the *blessed man hath dispersed, he hath gi-*
uen to the poore; and the Apostle saith, that he
which soweth bountifully shall reape bountifully; to
note vnto vs, that there is no losse in giuing to the
poore, but great gaine and aduantage, euen a
fruitfull harvest, yeelding 30, 40 or an 100^{fold}
Aa 2 increase.

So. 2. 1.
That God will
repay vs with
great increase.

Luk. 6. 38.

Pro. 3. 9. 10.

Pro. 11. 24.

2 Cor. 9. 6.
Lucus est pictus
in nomine suorum
sumptus. Tit. 2. 2.

increase. In which regard it may be truly said, that *Eleemosyna non est diuitiarum dispendium, sed discedendi potius compendium. quæstus q. omnium uberimus.* Giuing almes, is not the way to waste our wealth, but the Art of thriving, and the most compendious course to come vnto riches. The which consideration should make vs bountifull in doing these workes of mercie, seeing we haue much more benefit by the almes we giue, than our poore brethren who doe receiue them. For they are the ground into which these seeds are cast, and we the husbandmen who disperse and scatter them; now as seede is chiefly for his benefit who soweth it, and not for the benefit of the ground into which it is cast; so the poore haue but the present vse and possession of this seede of almes-deeds, but the benefit of the happy and heavenly haruest belongeth to those good husbandmen, who sowe in these grounds the seedes of their beneficence. Let vs not then grudge to giue almes to the poore when we haue fit occasion, but rather do them with ioy, and thankfulness vnto God, who hath giuen vs fit opportunity of sowing our seede, that so we may reape a fruitfull haruest. For what husbandman would not readily and cherefully harken to one who should offer vnto him fertile and fruitfull land, ready prepared and manured, to sowe his seede in, with a faithfull promise that he should reap the whole crop for his owne vse and benefit? But thus God dealeth with vs when he giueth vs oportunitie of releuing the poore: yea in truth much better &
more

more liberally. For though a man should freely receiue of another, land to sow his seede in, yet he were not sure of a fruitfull haruest, for many accidents happen, which cut off the hopes of the most skilfull husband-man, as frosts and mildewes, wormes and locusts, tares and weeds, too much wet, or too much drought, may destroy the corne, though the seede were neuer so good; or when it is readie for the sickle, the enemy may come and reape it: but if wee sow these seedes of our beneficence, beleeuing Gods promises and hoping for an happy haruest, we shall neuer faile of our expectation, because God who is infinire in power and truth, hauing promised a fruitfull crop, no outward accident is able to hinder it. And although our Almesdeedes seeme (like the seede sowne) to perish and rot, yet beleeuing what we see not, we shall assuredly see what wee belecue, and finde such a fruitfull increase in our heauenly haruest; as wee shall conclude, that much greater benefit redounded to vs who gaue, then vnto the poore who were the receiuers of our almes.

In the same respect, almesgiuing is in the Scripture compared to lending; yea, to such a loane, whereby we haue not onely the principall restored, but with great encrease. For whereas it wee lend our money vnto men, we shall haue but ten in the hundert, if for Gods sake wee lend vnto the poore, we shall haue an hundred for ten, yea, an hundred for one, and eternall life to boote. Nei-

Sect. 2.
Almesdeedes
compared to
lending vpon
vsure.

Mark. 10. 34

A a 3 though

HON. 19. 17.

LUC. 9. 35.

though the poore bee neuer so vnable, yet they haue an all-sufficient surety, euen GOD him- selfe, who hath vndertaken in this bounti- full manner to repay whatsoeuer is thus laid out. The which should make vs cheerefull in doing workes of mercy, seeing we our selues are sure of the largest gaine, for not the taker, but the putter out to vsurie hath the greatest profit. And not to giue readily vpon this consideration, is to pro- claime, either that we doe not beleue Gods pro- mises, nor giue that credit vnto him on his word, which we would giue to a Turke or Infidell dwel- ling among vs; or that wee doe not esteeme the payment of his spirituall grace or heavenly glory for currant money, or of equall value to these transitory trifles which we impart vnto the poore. For if a man of any credit should promise for the laying out of an hundred pound, that wee should haue a yeerely annuitie of so much for tearme of life, how eagerly would we catch at such an offer, though the quicke approach of death might make vs losers by the bargaine? But God promiseth, that if wee will lay out our money on these vses, wee shall haue an hundred for one, & for these earth- ly trifles, heavenly and euerlasting treasures; and who then would not willingly listen to such a motion, if hee beleueth him that maketh it, or valueth the bargaine that is offered vnto him? when Alchymists promise great summes of gold for the disburfing of a little money, though they neuer faile to deceiue those that beleue them, yet they finde many, who, to the vtter ruine
of

of their estates, will giue credit vnto them, being deluded with these golden hopes ; and therefore let it be a shame vnto all, which professing Christianity, will not trust God, who is truth it selfe, and cannot deceiue vs, promising better and more durable riches, euen heavenly and euerlasting treasures, vnto those who for his sake are liberall to the poore, seeing heereby they discouer grosse hypocrisie, in professing faith when as they are wholly possessed of infidelity, and heathenish diffidence, seeing they are ready to trust a cozening impostor, rather then the only true God; and carnall worldlinesse, which maketh them to esteeme more a little bread, a few scraps of meat, or cast apparell, then the bread of life, the heavenly Manna and foode of Angels, and those rich robes of glorie and blessednesse which shall neuer be worne out.

There is nothing that hindereth a man more from doing these workes of mercy, then excessiue loue of money and riches, which maketh them so loth to part with them ; whereas in truth if they loued them wisely, nothing should make them more ready to bestow them vpon these vses. For euen worldly men that are wise in their generation, the more that they loue their money, the seldomer they let it lie by them where it encreaseth not, and is subiect to many casualties, but the more ready they are to put it out, either vpon vsurie, if they can finde a sufficient debtor, or vpon some good bargaine which will returne it againe with great encrease. O why then should
not

Scēt. 3.
That loue of
our money
should moue
vs to part with
it to charitable
vses.

not we who professe our selues spiritually minded imitate this wisdome in our owne kinde : seeing if wee will lay out our coyne on these charitable vses, the gaine is inestimable, and our pay-master all-sufficient and infallible in his promises ? For what greater gaine can bee imagined then to change earth for heauen, transitorie trifles for eternall treasures, the bread of men for the bread of Angels, rotten ragges for glorious robes ; and a little drinke, yea, a cup of cold water, if the well or riuer be our best cellar for the water of life, which will infinitely delight and satisfie vs, without glutting or satietie ? why should wee thinke the poore so much beholding vnto vs for our scraps and superfluous reliques, and not rather our selues beholding vnto them, seeing they are the occasions of such inestimable gaine, for such trifling disbursements ? *Bee mindfull* (saith one) *ô man, not onely of that which thou giuest, but also of him who receiueth. For the poore may say vnto thee : consider, ô man, that I in receiuing almes giue no lesse vnto thee, then thou in bestowing them giuest vnto me. For if there were not some to receiue thy almes, thou couldest not giue earth and receiue heauen. Doe not looke vpon me, but vpon him that made both thee and mee ; and because thou hast heard mee, aske of him what thou wilt, and he will heare thee. Giue therefore thanks vnto him, who hath giuen thee meanes by such a small price to procure a thing so precious. Giue earthly things and thou shalt receiue heauenly, giue temporall things and thou shalt receiue eternall. Let therefore no man say that he giueth to the poore, when*

Augustine.

as

as it may more truely be said, that he giueth vnto himselfe rather then vnto them.

And as the gaine is inestimable, so the payment most assured; for wee haue Gods word and hand writing for it, who neuer failed of his promise; for as he is true of his word, so he is all-sufficient to performe. *Nihil promittit & non reddit: fidelis ille factus est debitor, esto tu auarus exactor.* He payeth whatsoeuer he promiseth; he is a true debtor, be thou a couetous exactour. Feare not to be an vsurer, so thou lendest vnto God; put out to him thy money, and expect great increase: for thou hast God for thy debtour, and his payment (like himselfe) is infinite. Giue to him who hath giuen all to thee, for thou canst neuer exceed him in bounty, though thou shouldest giue him all thou hast and thy selfe to boote; neither can thy liberalitie bring anie losse, seeing the more thou giuest the more thou shalt receiue. Doe not thou loue thy money, and wouldest thou haue it encreased. *Deliuere it not into the hands of men, who* Homine quare; quando accipit; gaudet, quando reddit; plorat; et accipiat precatur, ne reddat calumniatur. August. de tempore, cerm.
(as Austin saith) will reioyce when they borrow, and mourne when they repay it; Intreate that they may receiue, and caluminate when they should restore; who may be bankrupt and cannot, or deceitfull and will not pay: Or who will put thee off with many delaies, and trouble thee with expecting, as they haue formerly troubled thee with their importunitie in borrowing.

But if thou bee a wise vsurer, chuse God himselfe for thy debtor, who is the surest pay-master. Giue me of mine owne (saith Christ) and of a creditor make me to become thy debtor; and I will repay

*Debitor factus
est, non aliquid
a nobis a cependu
sed quod es pla-
cui promittendo
Ant. de verbu
Ap. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1.*

thee eternall treasures for transitory trifles. But vnderstand this soberly. For wee cannot (as the Papists dreame) make God our debtour by the merit of our works, but by his owne free and gracious promise. According to that of *Austin*; *He is made a debtor, not by receiuing something from vs, but because it hath pleased him to promise something to vs. For we after one manner say vnto man, thou owest me that which I haue giuen thee, and after another, thou owest me because thou hast promised mee: when as thou saiest, thou owest me, because I haue giuen thee, the benefit hath proceeded from thee, though it were lent and not giuen. But when thou sayest, thou owest me, because thou hast promised, thou requirest that which thou hast not giuen. For his godnesse that hath promised, will mooue him to giue, lest his fidelity should degenerate into maliciousnesse. &c.*

*Seet. 5.
That it is the
end of riches
to be employed
on good vses,
and not locked
vp.*

Againe, the loue of our money should not hinder vs from doing the works of mercie, but rather make vs more diligent in them; for he that loueth any thing wisely, desireth aboue all, that it may attaine to his right and cheife end, as being the best which his loue can wish vnto it: now the end of our money and riches, is not that they should lie rusting and rotting by vs without vse, but that they should bee communicated to the glorie of God and the good of our neighbours; and therefore seeing the more we loue our wealth, the better wee wish vnto it, and nothing is better for it then to attaine to these ends, they loue it not at all, or at least after a foolish manner, who by imprisoning their riches, and so frustrating their cheife

cheife end, doe hinder them from attaining vnto their perfection.

Finally, if wee wisely loue our wealth, let it bee our cheife care, that we may long enioy it : the which we cannot doe by keeping it on the earth, for though wee keepe it vnder locke and key, bolt and barre, continuall watch and ward, it may bee lost whilst wee liue ; but if not so, yet when death commeth (and for ought wee know it may come to day before to morrow) it will spoile vs of all, and turne vs naked out of the world, as wee came naked into it. But the onely meanes to haue the fruit and benefit of our riches for euer, is to send them before vs into our heavenly countrey, where wee shall haue our everlasting habitation, and the best meanes of transporting them thither, is to deliuer them vnto the poore, who like trusty porters will carrie them for vs, for if wee carry them our selues, they will, like heauie burthens, hinder our iourney, and like the camels bunch, keepe vs from entring into the straight gate ; whereas if the poore whom God hath appointed for this seruice carry them for vs, we shall auoyd the trouble, and escape this danger. The which should be a forcible argument to moue vs with a bountifull hand to giue vnto the poore, seeing whatsoeuer is so giuen is sent before vs, and whatsoeuer is houred vp in our chests is lost and left behinde vs. And what folly is this, there to leaue thy wealth whence thou art departing, and not to send it before thee whether thou art going? to leaue and loose thy riches in thy Inne and the

Seēt 6.

That by giuing
our riches to
the poore, wee
long enioy
them.

place of thy pilgrimage, and not to transport it into thine owne Country and mansion-house where thou art euer to reside? And therefore seeing the onely way to keepe our goods for euer, is to part with them for a time, and the meanes to preserve them for everlasting vse, is to disperse & scatter them amongst the poore members of Iesus Christ; and contrariwise the keeping them too carefully on earth, is the direct way to loose them in heaven; let vs giue that which wee can no otherwise keepe, that wee may receiue that which we can neuer loose, and if wee thinke that heaven is our home let vs send our wealth thither before vs, that we may the more cheerefully trauell after it. For hee who is eternally to dwell in those heavenly mansions, doth in this life send his heart thither to take possession: which that wee may do let vs lay vp our treasures there, that so our hearts may bee there also. Whereas contrariwise hee whose onely care is to hound vp riches vpon the earth, doth plainly shew that this world is his natieue home and Countrie, and that hee hath no right or interest in the heavenly *Canaan*.

Sect. 7.
That our in-
estimable gaine
counteruaileth
our temporary
forbearance.

A second impediment, which hindereth men from doing these workes of mercy is, because they looke at this great returne of gaine, as being many yeares and ages after to bee receiued; for though they like these heavenly treasures, which the Lord promiseth to those, who by giuing to the poore do lend vnto him; and cannot but confesse that God is the best and surest Paymaster, yet they are discouraged from thus laying out

out their mony, because he seemeth to take long daies of payment, and hath appointed the place of receipt in another world, whereas they, both for place and time are wholly for the present, and in truth, desire to be paid in their own coine, that is, in transitory and momentary riches which are subiect to their senses. But to these I answer, that if they liue onely by sense and not by faith, they haue indeed little cause to exchange their earthly possessions for heavenly treasures, seeing they can haue no true hope of comming into that place of happinesse, or of inioying those diuine riches which are prepared onely for the faithfull; and therefore let such keepe their mony till it perish with them. But let those, who being true Christians, can with the eye of faith pearce the heauens and there behold things inuisible, continually exercise themselves, in these workes of mercy, notwithstanding this discouragement; seeing they know not how soone the Lord will call them to account, and make all reckonings straight which are betweene them. For howsoeuer they may conceiue hope of prolonging their liues to an hundred yeares, yet it may be, it will not last another moneth or day, and so their payment shall be as speedie and quicke, as great and inestimable. But say that the line of their life should outreach the length of their longest hopes, yet haue they good cause to lay out their wealth on this spirituall and heavenly bargaine. First, because if they will waite and expect with patience, they haue such a sure Pay-master who

Gal. 6. 9.

Ecclef. 11. 1.

will not faile to accomplifh all his promifes. According to that Gal. 6. 9. *Let vs not be wearie in well doing; for in due feafon wee fhall reape, if wee faint not.* And though our bread feemeth to bee caft on the face of the waters, and fo euen caft away, yet we fhall furely finde it after many daies, as it is Ecclef. 11. 1. Secondly, the ineflimable worth of the heauenly reward which alfo will be euerlafting, when wee do inioy it, may fufficiently incourage vs to lay out our riches on fuch infinite hopes, though the full payment bee a while delayed. Euen the moft greedie Vfurur will lend his mony for longer time, according to the greatneffe of the intereft and increafe which hee expecteth. The husbandman though neuer fo couetous is content to fpare his feede wheate for a longer time, then his fummer corne, & to expect the harueft almoft the whole yeare with as much patience and comfort, as he doth a few moneths for the other graine, becaufe hee knoweth that when it cometh it will be of much better value. And we fee by experience that our Merchants as willingly venter their wealth into the furtheft parts of the East *Indies*, as into the next adioyning Countries, becaufe their greater gain will fufficiently recompence their forbearance and reward their patience. And yet the Vfurur meeting with banrupts may with his hoped gain loose his principall; the husbandman after much coft and paines, may by vnfeafonable weather and many casualties, loose both the gain of harueft, and alfo a great part of the feede which he hath fowed;

ed, and the Merchant if he loofeth not his goods together with the expectation of his gaine, yet he getteth and recouereth them after long time and innumerable dangers. O why then should wee not chuse rather to put out our mony to such a debter, as promising inestimable gaine for the time of our forbearance, is also most true of his promise and all-sufficient to performe? why should wee not patiently expect the comming vp and ripening of the seedes of our beneficence, seeing wee are sure of such a rich croppe and heavenly haruest? and why should wee not like wise Merchants venter our goods into the holy land, seeing though the returne be slow, yet in the end it will bring the best and surest gaine?

CHAP. 18.

Of certaine speciall benefits both corporall and spirituall promised to those who give liberally to the reliefe of poore.

AND thus hane I shewed; that if by giving to the poore we lend vnto the Lord, we shall receiue full restitution with great aduantage. Now we will consider wherein this restitution is to be made, and in what things it principally consisteth; namely, in all blessings and benefits both temporall and æternall. The temporall benefits respect either our posteritie, or our selues; for if we bountifullly relieue the poore, the reward

Señ. 1.
That he who
releueth the
poore shall bee
blessed in his
posteritie.

reward of our charitie shall not only extend vnto vs, but also to our of-spring and progenie; according to that in the second verie of this Psalm: *His seede shall be mighty vpon earth, the generation of the vpright shall be blessed.* So the Lord promiset, *Esa. 58. 10. 12.* that if we will draw out our soule to the hungry, and satisfie the afflicted soule; the Lord will not only satisfie our soules in drought and make fat our bones, but that those also that come of vs shall prosper vnto many generations. Now what better inheritance can we leaue to our children than the blessing of God, which like an euer-springing fountaine will nourish and comfort them in the time of drought, when as our owne prouision which we haue left vnto them may faile, and when the heate of affliction riseth, will like standing waters be dried vp?

Sect. 1.
That God re-
wardeth our
almesdeeds
with corporall
and earthly
blessings.

Pro: 3. 9. 10.

The temporall benefits which respect our own persons are either corporall or spirituall. For the Lord, to incourage vs in these workes of mercy, doth repay and reward vs, not only with the true treasures of his spirituall graces; but stooping to our infirmitie, he payeth vs with our owne money also, euen with the coyne of worldly blessings which is so current among vs. According to that *Pro. 3. 9. 10.* *Honour the Lord with thy substance, so shall thy barnes be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.* And because by this liberal giuing, men doubt lest they themselues should come vnto pouertie; he assur-eth vs, that he who giueth to the poore shall not lack, *Pro: 28. 27.* So that if we sow the seede of our bene-

Pro: 28. 27.

beneficence it will returne vnto vs a double harvest; the crop of temporall benefits in this life, and of euerlasting blessednes in the life to come. Yea but thou seest not this increase in thy worldly estate by giuing almes. And if thou beleeuest no more than thou seest, why dost thou take vpon thee the name of a Christian, who liueth by faith rather than by sense? For by how many secret passages can God conueigh vnto thee the reward of thy almesdeeds, though he writeth no superscription vpon them, to certifie thee for what it is sent? it is sufficient that thou hast it, and that thou knowest that he sent it, as for the reasons which moued him to giue these benefits vnto thee, he will acquaint thee with them more particularly, when as he shall call thee to make vp thy reckoning. Thou growest in thy stature from a childe vnto a man, and thou seest not thy growing, though thou perceiuest that thou art growne; neither knowest thou the particular time and meanes, when, or whereby thou camest to this height. And thou knowest and acknowledgedst that thou art nourished by thy meate, though thou seest not the secret passages whereby it is carried from the stomacke to the seuerall parts, nor canst tell at what time or by what foode thou hast beene chiefly nourished. Why then hast thou not the like faith and much stronger in spirituall, which thou hast in respect of naturall things, seeing they are much more secret and insensible? and when thou hast Gods promise of reward, and seest it performed by his blessings multiplied in

Cc

thy

Math. 25.34.

thy bosome, why doest thou doubt or call them into question; or ascribe them to thy selfe or other helps, seeing whatsoeuer are the meanes, they are of Gods sending? Finally, if thou sayest that thou seest no possibilitie of increasing thy wealth by giuing away a great part of it vnto the poore: I answer, and what more reason hast thou by the collection of sense, that thy seede which thou sowest should be multiplyed, which thou castest away and lettest rot in the earth, vnlesse thou hadst learned it by experience? And is not Gods word a much more infallible teacher & surer ground for thy faith to rest vpon, especially when thou art not without experience of the like increase springing from the sowing of the seeds of thy beneficence? To conclude this point, if thou doubtest of these promises of God made vnto those who relieue the poore, because thou seest not how or when they are performed; why doest thou beleue the remission of thy sins, saluation by Christ, and euerlasting life, when as thou seest none of these, nor hast any other ground but Gods promise, euen as thou hast for the reward of thy almesdeeds? and therefore if thou doubtest of the one, thou doubtest of the other; and were not the profession of thy faith concerning those spirituall things good cheape, but should cost thee as deare as the giuing of almes, thou wouldest doubtles discouer and proclaime thy infidelitie there as well as here, and plainly shew that it was in meere formalitie and hypocrisie.

sest 3.

The promises also of spirituall blessings are
many

many and diuers. In which respect *Chrysostome* That God will
compareth almes-deeds vnto good corne sowne be mercifull to
in a fertile soyle, which euery yeare bringeth those that shew
forth fruit in due season: saving that herein they mercy.
differ, namely whereas, this fruit in the richest *Chry. in distum*
ground commeth but once a yeare, the spirituall *Ab. fidei, Oper-*
fruit of almes-deeds springeth euery day, as con- *et esse habiles.*
fidence in God, assurance of the remission of sins,
a good conscience, spirituall gladnes, ioyfull hope,
and other good things which God hath prepared
for those that loue him. But among these innum-
erable spirituall blessings we will obserue some
few. As first, they who are mercifull to the
poore, shall finde mercy at the hands of God; ac-
cording to that Math. 5. 7. *Blessed are the mercifull,*
for they shall obtaine mercy. Now what an excellent *Math. 5. 7.*
thing is this, to haue the treasures of Gods mercy *Eccle. 4. 10.*
in our owne keeping, and to haue the key in our
hand, by which we may go in to & enioy them
our owne pleasure; for if we be mercifull to the
poore, and impart vnto them some of our small
store, the Lord will be mercifull to vs, and com-
municate vnto vs abundance of pittie and com-
passion, out of the infinite treasures of his loue
and goodnes.

Secondly, if we heare & regard the cry of the *3. c. 4.*
poore, begging of vs such things as are necessary, *That if wee*
the Lord will heare our cry when we call vpon *heare the cry*
him for a supply of our wants; according to that *of the poore,*
Esa. 58. 7. If thou deale thy bread to the hungry, and *God will heare*
bring the poore that are cast out into thy house &c. *vs.*
Then shalt thou call, and the Lord shall answer; thou *Esa. 58. 7. 8.*

216 *Of spirituall blessings promised to the merciful.* CHAR. 18.

AA. 10. 4.

Iob. 31. 20.

Pro. 21. 13.

Sec. 5.
That if we pitie
the poore
God will pittie
vs in our afflictions.

Psal. 41. 1.

Eccli. 29. 12.

shalt cry, and he shall say, here I am. An example whereof we haue in *Cornelius*, who with his fasting and prayers ioyning almesdeeds, had this comfortable message from God, that his prayers and almesdeeds were come vp for a memoriall before him. Yea in truth, these workes of mercy will speake loude for vs in Gods eares, when we hold our peace; and the *loynes of the poore shall blesse vs*, when they and we are sleeping in our beds. But contrariwise, if we will not heare the suites of the poore, neither will the Lord giue vs audience when we sue vnto him, according to that. Pro. 21. 13. *who so stoppeth his eares at the cry of the poore, he also shall cry himselfe, and shall not be heard.*

Thirdly, if we pittie the poor in their miseries, and with our helping hand free them from their distresse, the Lord likewise will take compassion on vs in the time of our afflictions, and when it is most seasonable will deliuer vs from them: according to that, Ps 41. 1. *Blessed is he that considereth the poore, the Lord will deliuer him in the time of trouble. 2. The Lord will preserue him and keepe him alieue, and he shall be blessed vpon the earth, and thou wilt not deliuer him vnto the will of his enemies. 3. The Lord will strengthen him vpon the bed of languishing; thou wilt make all his bed in his sicknesse.* So Eccli. 29. 12: *Shut vp almes in thy storehouses; and it shall deliuer thee from all affliction. 13. It shall fight for thee against thine enemies, better then a mightie shield and strong speare.* And the Lord promisetht that if we draw out our soules to the hungrie and fatishe the afflicted soule, then *shall our light rise in obscuritie,*
and

CHAP. 18. *Of spirituall blessings promised to the mercifull.* 217

and our darknesse be as noone day; Es. 58. 10. whereby is meant, that the light of comfort by a gracious deliuerance shall shine vnto vs in the night of afflictions; or such a measure of inward ioy, as is able to make the afflictions themselues, euen whilest they last, sweete and comfortable; according to that, Psalm. 30. 5. *weeping may indure for a night, but ioy commeth in the morning.* I sa. 58. 10.
Psal. 30. 5.

Fourthly, by our bountie towards the poore we haue the benefit of their prayers vnto God, the which are very auailable for the obtaining of all good things for vs; the which argument the Apostle vseth to incite the Corinthians to a liberrall contribution, 2. Cor. 9. 14. As also by the same meanes we giue them occasion of praising and glorifying God, *whilest by the experiment of this ministration they see our professed subiection to the Gospell of Christ,* as the Apostle speaketh in the same place. vers. 13. 2. Cor. 9. 14.
13.

Finally by these workes of mercy wee are furthered notably in the way to saluation, the which our Sauour implieth, whenas hee perswadeth vs *to make vs friends of the Mammon of vnrigheteousnes that when wee faile they may receiue vs into euermoring habitations.* Luk. 16. 9. For in these earthly riches which are of small value the Lord trieth our fidelity and obedience, and if in the triall we be found faultie, these talents are taken from vs, and we cast into the prison of outer darknes; but if by our honest, faithfull and charitable disposing of them wee are approoued, the Lord will commend vs for good stewards, and commit to our Se. 6.
That almes-
deedes further
our saluation.
Luk. 16. 9.

218 *Of spirituall blessings promised to the mercifull.* CHAP. 17.

keeping those heavenly riches and euerlasting treasures. According to that which followeth in the next words, *hee that is faithfull in that which is least, is faithfull also in much: and he that is vnjust in the least, is vnjust also in much: If therefore yee haue not been faithfull in the vnrighteous Mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? and if yee haue not been faithfull in that which is another mans, who shall giue you that which is your owne?* So the Apostle would haue rich men charged to do good, to be rich in good workes, readie to distribute, willing to communicate, that they might lay up store for themselves, a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternall life. 1. Tim. 6. 18. 19.

1. Tim. 6. 18. 19.

Yea in truth by exercising our selues in these workes of mercie, euerlasting happinesse is begun in this life; not onely, as thereby we haue an entrance into it by assurance of faith; but also haue the earnest and fruits of this happinesse and blessednesse. In both which regards they are in the Scriptures pronounced blessed, who taking compassion on the poore doe liberally relieue them.

Pro. 14. 21.
and 22. 9.

As Pro. 14. 21. *He that hath mercie on the poore happy is he.* And Pro. 22. 9. *Hee that hath a bountifull eye shall be blessed, for hee giueth of his bread to the poore.* And thus are they blessed of God, according to that. Deur. 15. 10. *Thou shalt surely giue to thy poore brother and thine heart shall not be greened when thou giuest vnto him: because for this thing the Lord thy God, shall blesse thee in all thy workes, and in all that thou puttest thine hand to; which blessing in these temporall things*

Deur. 15. 10.

CHAP. 19. *Of spirituall blessings promised to the mercifull.* 219

is vnto the faithfull an earnest and pledge of their euerlasting blessednesse. And our Sauour pronounceth them, *blest who are mercifull, because they shall obtaine mercie*, Math. 5. 7. and telleth vs, that if in stead of our kinred and rich friends, wee will inuite the poore to be our guests, we shall be blessed. Luk. 14. 14. And thus also they are blessed of men; as we see in the example of *Iob*, who faith, that because he deliuered the *poore that cryed, and the fatherlesse, and him that had none to helpe him, the blessing of him that was ready to perish came vpon him*. Iob. 29. 12. 13. And in this regard, because our almesdeeds are the meanes of deriuing vnto vs so many blessings, they themselues haue the name of a *blessing* giuen vnto them by the Apostle, 2. Corinth 9. 5.

By all which it appeareth, that it is much *better to giue then to receiue*, as it is Acts 20. 35. Because the poore receiue onely things transitory, and but of small value, but they that giue, things spirituall, inestimable and heauenly. In which regard it may bee truely sayd, that as he who is mercifull is good vnto others, so he is best of all to himselfe; for whereas hee onely releueth their bodies, he feedeth and refresheth his owne soule; according to that Prou. 11. 17. *The mercifull man doth good to his owne soule*. And ver. 25. *The liberall soule shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also himselfe*. Whereof it is that God is sayd to haue bestowed, and the Churches of Macedonia to haue receiued grace, when in their affliction and pouerty they abounded vnto the riches of

Math. 5. 7.

Luk. 14. 14.

Iob. 29. 12. 13.

2. Corinth 9. 5.

Se&. 7.

That, the greatest benefit of our almes redoundeth to our selues. Acts 20. 35.

Prou. 11. 17. &

25.

of their liberalitie, and euen aboute their power contributed to the necessity of the poore Saints.

2. Cor. 8. 1. 2. And therefore let vs also labour to abound in this grace, as the Apostle exhorteth. vers. 7. because there is no losse in this spirituall traffique, but the more we lay out, the greater will be our gaine, the more liberally we giue, the more bountifullly we shall receiue.

Sect. 8
That fearefull
threatnings are
denounced a-
gainst the vn-
mercifull.

But if all these arguments, taken from our own good, will not perswade vs to be bountifull in doing these works of mercie, yet let those threatnings of euils and comminations of Gods iudgements, somewhat rouse vs vp to the performance of these Christian duties. For the Lord so abhorreth the neglect of them, that hee reckoneth it among those hainous sinnes of Sodome, which moued him in his fearefull wrath to destroy them with fire and brimstone from heauen. Ezech. 16. 49.

Ezech. 16. 49.

Prou. 21. 13.
*Frustra manus
ad Deum expan-
dit, qui lias ad
pauperes non ex-
tendit.*

2. Cor. 9. 6.

Gal 6. 8.

Prou. 28. 27.

Deut. 24. 15.

And that wee may not fall into it, threatneth against all who liue in it, most greiuous punishments. As first, that he will turne away his eares from hearing their praers. Prou. 21. 13. *Who so stoppeth his eares at the crie of the poore, he shall also cry himselfe, and shall not bee heard.* That as they sow nothing in the seed-time of this life, so they shall reap nothing in the haruest of happinesse. 2. Cor. 9. 6. that as they haue sowed only to the flesh, so of the flesh they shall reap nothing but corruption. Gal. 6. 8. that they shall lie open to the curse of the poore: according to that. Prou. 28. 27. *He that giueth vnto the poore shall not lacke, but hee that hideth his eyes, shall haue many a curse.* The which curses

of the poore he will heare and ratifie, according to the saying of the sonne of Syrach. chap. 6. 5. *Eccle. 6. 5.*
Turne not away thine eie from the needie, and giue him no occasion to curse thee. 6. For if he curse thee in the *Iob. 3. 1. 16. 29.*
 bitternesse of his soule, his praier shall bee heard of him that made him. Finally, the Lord threatneth vnto them iudgement without mercie who haue shewed no mercy. *Iam. 2. 13.* To which purpose one saith, *Iam. 2. 13.*
Thou hast not bene mercifull, and thou shalt not finde mercy, thou hast not opened thy gates to the poore, and thou shalt be shut out of the gates of heauen; thou hast not giuen bread, and thou shalt not receiue the bread of life. And againe: *The fruits which thou shalt reape, will be like the seede which thou hast sown. Thou hast sown bitternesse and thou shalt reape bitternesse; thou hast sown crueltie, and thou shalt reape cruelty. Thou hast shunned mercie, and mercy shall shun thee; thou hast hated the poore, and hee in like manner shall hate thee, who beeing rich was content for our sake to become poore.* The which denunciation of iudgements shall accordingly bee executed at the latter day, when vnmercifull men shall bee banished out of Gods Kingdome, not only for hurting the poore, but for not helping them: nor for taking away their bread, drinke and clothes, but for not giuing these things vnto them. An example whereof our Sauour propoundeth in the parable of the rich glutton, who hauing receiued from God the large portion of a childe, grudged to spare out of his plenty and superfluity the portion of a dog, euen the scraps which fell vnder his table. And therefore his punishment was answerable, for he

Luk. 16.

*In inferno positi
 ad petenda mi-
 nima periscunt,
 q. e. hic parua
 negant. August.
 de Conflict. viii.*

who denied his crummes, to satisfie poore *Lazarus* his hunger, was himselfe denied a droppe of colde water to quench his owne heate and thirst.

CHAP. 19.

That they who are liberall in giuing almes, shall bee rewarded with permanent and eternall blessings.

SECT. 1.
That our
almesdeedes
shall be rewar-
ded with per-
manent blec-
sings.

Prou. 23, 5.

AND thus much haue we spoken of the manifold blessings & benefits which are promised to those who exercise themselues in the works of mercy; now we are to speak of the durable continuance of them, expressed in those words; *endureth for ever*. The first word signifying, that the fruits of our almesdeedes are *lasting*, for they flie not from vs, but endure; the other, that they are *euerslasting*, for they stay with vs, not onely a long time, but they endure for ever. Concerning the former, the benefit of our almesdeedes is very great, for whereas our riches are in their own nature most flitting, mutable and inconstant, they being euery day redie to leaue vs, or we them; by giuing of almes they are preserved for our vse: whereas like an Eagle they are still ready to flie away from vs, as the wise man speaketh, Prou. 23. 5. by this meanes their wings are clipped, so as they cannot take their flight nor depart from vs. In which respect that conceipt should not hinder vs from giuing almes which hindereth many, namely,

namely, that thejr riches so bestowed are meere-
ly lost; yea, rather nothing more should per-
swade vs to be bountifull in giuing, seeing it is the
only meanes to preserve them from losing; for if
wee keepe them, they will flie away from vs, but
if wee giue them, they will continue with vs. If
wee imprison them within stone-wals neuer so
surely vnder locke and key, bolts and iron barres,
they will make an escape; but if we commit them
to the custody of the poore, they will become la-
sting treasures and durable riches which will long
continue with vs. So that if we wold make choice
of a treasure for our wealth which cannot be vio-
lated, of a locke that cannot be picked, and of an
iron barred chest that cannot bee broken open;
let the poore keepe it in their bellies, which of all
other places is most safe and secure. For this is
Christs treasure, which none can burst into, and
what is put into it, is in his custody, and therefore
safe enough, because he is the strong man whom
none can turne out of possession, nor plucke any
thing from him with violence, which he holdeth
in his hand. In which regard it may bee truely
sayd, that as the mercifull man is of all others most
rich, so also most prouident in keeping his goods
the safest & securest; throug his prouidence from
feare of losing them; for what he giuerh, he pla-
ceth in a sure treasury, out of which there is no-
thing lost. Hee that keepeth his money reserueth
it to many casualties, as fire, theeves, oppression
of the mighty, inuasion of enemies, by which
how many haue been suddenly spoiled of all they

Luk.
Ioh. 10. 28.

*Pecunia qua ser-
uatur casibus,
seruit quae in
misericordia re-
seruatur vni-
uersi. A
Temp*

Invasit hosti-
dam in, nunquid
sur adoret calu?
occidit seruum
custodit, nunquid
Domum serva-
tor. m? August.

Eccles. 11. 1. 2.

Luk. 12. 33.

hath beene a wise praetise, who can
passe by the dangers? with which
if we are not careful, will we befoole our
selues. We will give some part to the
poore, and some part shall be preserved out of
the gale of death? because what is thus
bestowed is not sleeping and reserued in the
treasure of the earth for our vse. Now as one saith,
though the enemy hath invaded the house, he
could neuer have invaded heauen; though hee
hath killed thy seruants that watched thy wealth,
he could not haue killed God the chiefe keeper
and preseruer. And this argument the Wiseman
vseth to perswade vs vnto these workes of mercy
with a bountifull hand, Eccles. 11. 1. 2. *Cast thy bread
vpon the face of the waters; for thou shalt finde it af-
ter many dayes. Giue a portion to seuen and also vnto
eight; for thou knowest not what euill shall befall vpon
the earth.* So our Sauour Math. 6. 19. *Lay not vp
for your selues treasures vpon earth, where moth and
rust doth corrupt, and where theeues breake through
and steale. 20. But lay vp for your selues treasures
in heauen, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt,
and where theeues doe not breake through and steale.*
and Luk. 12. 33. *Sell that yee haue and giue almes,
provide your selues bagges which waxe not old, & trea-
sures in the heauens that faileth not, where no thief
approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. What foolish
couetousnes (saith one) is this which maketh men hide
their money here among theeues? for if thou louest
money truly, lay them vp where they may be safe, and
open to no violence. For that which thou now dost,
sheweth*

sheweth not thy loue to thy wealth, but the mischiefs of thy seruitude, and that thou but hereby seekest thine owne continuall vexation and griefe. If any man would shew thee a safe place for thy treasures, though it were in the wilderness, thou wouldest harken vnto him; but now not man but God sheweth thee a place of safety, not in the wilderness but in heauen, and thou regardest it not. but though thou shouldest hide them ten thousand times in the earth, thou couldest neuer be freed from care. For howsoeuer perhaps thou shouldest not loose them, yet thou shouldest neuer be without the feare of loosing them. But if thou giuest thy riches to the poore, thou shalt be free from these feares and cares. And which is more, thou shalt not onely safely hide thy gold, but thou shalt hereby sow it, and receiue plentifull increase which (herein better than other seedes) shall endure for euer.

*Nam etiam si
nunquam eas
foris. Ite perdas
nunquam tamen
carebis timore
perdendi. Chrys.
in Math. 6.
Homil. 21.*

But let vs consider where this place of safetie is, in which we are counsailed to lay vp our treasures; namely not in a strange kingdome whither we shall not come our selues, or being come thither shall make but small stay; but in heauen, our own native cuntry, the place of our inheritance, among our kindred and chiefe friends, and of our perpetuall abode and euerlasting habitation; for they that feede Christ being hungry, and clothe him being naked in his poore members, shall inherit the heauenly kingdome which God hath prepared for them from the foundation of the world, Math. 25. 34. they that deale their bread to the hungry and couer the naked, shall haue their righteousnes to go before them, & the glory of the Lord shall be their reward.

*Sect. 2.
That by giuing
almes we lay
vp treasures in
our own coun-
try.*

Math. 25. 34.

Esa. 53. 9.
 Non sunt bona
 hominis quae fa-
 ciunt ferre non
 potest. Solamiso-
 racordia est comes
 defunctorum.
 Ambros.
 Prebe relictis,
 accipies eorum.
 August.

Quae subleuia sunt
 illis relinquere,
 unde existeris et
 illuc non pre-
 mittere quo itu-
 rus es? Chrysost.
 in Math. 6.

Chrysost. ibid.

Esa: 58. 8. They that sell and giue to the poore, for their transitorie riches, shall haue a treasure in the heauens that fayleth not, Luk. 12. 33. Now what an excellent change is this, to haue heavenly things for earthly, & treasures in our own country, where we shall inioy them for euer, for parting with vncertaine riches in the place of our pilgrimage, which we are ready euery day to leaue behinde vs; to forgoe things which wee cannot keepe, and obtaine such as wee cannot loose? But this exchange mercifull men do make; for when they giue their goods to the poore, they do not loose them, but only commit them vnto them, as vnto porters, to be caried and transported for their vse into those heavenly and euerlasting habitations: whereas if they should hould them vp and keepe them vnto themselues, they would be cumberfom burthens, which would hinder their iourney thither, and yet when they haue done what they can, death at length, if not some other casualtie in the meane time, will strip them naked of all, to goe out as they came into the world, and let them carry nothing with them, but the sinne and guilt which they haue committed in compassing of them. What madnes therefore is it to leaue our wealth there, from whence we are euery day departing, and not to send it before vs whither we are going? to leaue and lose it in a strange kingdome, when as we might safely send it before vs into our owne country? especially considering (as one saith) *that he who placeth his treasures on earth, hath nothing to expect and hope for*

for in heauen: for why should he looke vp into heauen, who hath laid vp nothing there? what soeuer thou dost for thy soule, that is truly thine, but what thou leauest behinde thee that thou loosest.

And thus we see the place where our riches will indure and remaine for vs; now the time of their continuance, and of our inioying them in heauen is for euer; in which respect wee may truly say of almes-deeds, that they are that meate which will not mould, the drinke that sowreth not, the garment that will not weare out, and the treasure which is not subiect either to rust or stealing; And this eternity of reward is promised in many places of Scripture to those who exercise themselves in these workes of mercie. So Luk. 16. 9. *Make to your selues friends of the Mammon of unrighteousnesse, that when you faile they may receiue you into euerlasting habitations.* And the Apostle would haue those who are rich in the world to be rich also in good workes, readie to distribute, and willing to communicate; laying vp in store for themselves a good foundation, against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternall life. 1. Tim. 6. 19. yea so doth the reward of euerlasting happines through Gods free grace and goodnesse belong to these workes of mercie, that the doing or neglecting them is accompanied with eternall blessednes or endlesse miserie; for the sentence of absolution or condemnation shall be pronounced, either for or against vs, accordingly as we haue performed or omitted them. To those who haue fed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sicke &c. come

Sect. 7.
That the reward of our almes-deeds and the punishment of their neglect shall be euerlasting.

Luk. 16. 9.

1. Tim. 6. 19.

ye blessed of my Father inheri: the kingdome prepared for you from the foundation of the world; and contrariwise to those who haue not done these duties; Depart from me yee cursed into euerlasting fire prepared for the Denill and his Angels. The consideration whereof should bee a sufficient motiue to stirre vs vp to the doing of these good workes, though there were no other reason; for if wee either loue heauen or feare hell, if wee would be euerlastingly rewarded or would not bee euerlastingly punished and tormented; if wee desire with vnspeakable confidence and ioy to appeare before our sweete Sauour and to our inestimable comfort heare that blessed sentence; or would not be astonished and perplexed with that horror and guilt, which shall make vs to crie out to the hilles and rockes to fall downe and couer vs from the presence of our terrible iudge; let vs spare something from our superfluities, yea if need require, euen from our necessities, that we may relieue and cherish the poore distressed members of Iesus Christ.

CHAP. 20.

That God will make the estate of the mercifull prosperous and flourishing.

Sect. 1.

That by giuing almes our estate is confirmed and increased.

AND so I come from the first maine argument expressed in the text, to the second contained in the last words: *his name shall be exalted, with honour.*

honour. In which words the holy Ghost promifeth to them who are liberall and diligent in doing the workes of mercie, a most prosperous and flourishing estate in this world and in the world to come. For first by exalting of their horne is signified the confirmation, strengthening and increasing of their prosperous estate, the metaphor being borrowed from those beasts whose chiefe strength, both for offence and defence, is principally in their hornes. And thus it is said Psal. 18. 2.

The Lord is my rocke and my fortresse, and my deliverer, my God, my strength in whom I will trust, my buckler, and the horne of my saluation, and my high tower. By all which borrowed speaches the same thing is signified, namely that the Lord was his chiefe strength by whom hee had safety and defence maugre the malice of all his enemies. So Psal. 75. 10. *All the hornes of the wicked will I cut off, but the hornes of the righteous shall bee exalted.* Psal. 75. 10.

By which is meant that he would disable and destroy the one, and aduance and confirme the prosperitie of the other. And thus the Apostle expoundeth these wordes; for perswading the *Corinthians* to be bountifull in doing these workes of mercie, hee taketh away a secret obiection which might hinder them in their liberality, namely that hereby they should impouerish their estates, and bring themselues to want: assuring them that there was no cause to feare this, for God (saith he) is able to make all grace abound towards you, that yee alwaies hauing all sufficiencie in all things, may abound to euery good worke, as it is

2. Cor. 9. 8. 10.

written, he hath dispersed abroad, hee hath given to the poore, his righteousness remaineth for ever. And in stead, of those words, his home shall bee exalted with honour; he addeth: Now hee that minisheth seede to the sower, doth minister bread for your foode, and multiplie your seede sowne, and increase the frutes of your righteousness. Whereby the same thing is signified, to wit, that God will increase their plentie and confirme their estate, so that the sowing of the seedes of their beneficence, shall bring them no more losse, then the sowing of corne doth to the Husbandman, which is the onely meanes of continuing his store and abundance. And thus also the Lord by the Prophet *Esay* promisseth to those that draw out their soules to the hungry and satisfie the afflicted soule, that hee will guide them continually, satisfie their soule in drougths and make fat their bones; and that they shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water whose waters faile not. *Esa.* 58. 10. 11. So *Pro.* 11. 24. There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more then is meete, but it tendeth to povertie. 25. The liberall soule shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall bee watered also himselfe. And *Pro.* 28. 27. He that giveth to the poore shall not lacke. The which consideration should effectually moove all to be bountifull in doing these workes of mercy, seeing they doe not weaken, but much strengthen our estate; and are so farre off from being the causes of our want and povertie, that they are the onely meanes of our plentie and abundance.

Secondly,

Es. 58. 10. 11.

Pro. 11. 24.

Pro. 28. 27.

Secondly, by exalting their horne, is meant that their hearts shall be replenished with ioy, and delight; for it is the manner of horned beasts to expresse their inward ioy by lifting vp and tossing their heads and hornes. And surely it is no small pleasure which a Christian taketh in performing these workes of mercie; For first these vertuous actions in themselves do euen for the present fill their hearts with ioy who rightly performe them, in which regard the heathen man defineth *a benefite to bee an action proceeding from goodwill, yeelding ioy to him that receiueth it, and receiuing it whilest it yeeldeth it.* But much more doe they fill our hearts with ioy, as they are euident signes to assure vs that wee are indued with Gods saving graces, and as they doe, being fruites of a linely faith, ascertain vs of our future rewards, and the fruition of Gods presence, *where there is fullnesse of ioy for euermore.*

Sect. 3.
That the mercifull shall bee filled with ioy.

Seneca.

Lastly it is said, that *his horne shall be exalted with honour, or glorie*; whereby is meant, that mercifull men shall haue a faire passage to the compassing of their riches and inioying of their pleasures; and whereas worldlings whilest they aduance and confirme their estates, and obtaine their pleasures by vnlawfull meanes, are commonly branded with the markes of their sinne, & exposed to dishonour and reproach both before God and men; they atcheiuing these things by sowing the seedes of their bounty, which God blesteth with this fruitfull increase, become honourable and of high esteeme, not only amongst

Sect. 3.
That the mercifull shall attaine to a prosperous estate with honour.

men, but also in the sight of God himselfe. Yea in truth the duty of almes-giving it selfe is exceeding honourable; for if it bee a great honour amongst men to bee the Kings steward, and to haue the power of disposing his goods for the vse of all his familie, or to be his Almoner to distribute his almes vnto the poore, how much more honourable is it, to beare these offices vnder the most high and mightie Monarch of heauen and earth? And as it is very honourable in it selfe, so also it bringerth much honour with it. For he that relieueth the poore honoreth God, according to that

Pro. 3. 9. & 14.

Pro. 14. 31. *He that oppresseth the poore reproacheth*31. *his maker, but he that honoureth him, hath mercie on the poore, and who so honour God, those will be honor,*

1. Sam. 1. 30.

as it is 1. Sam. 1. 30. *those that draw out their soules to the hungrie, and satisfie the afflicted soule, their light shall rise in obscuritie, and their darkenesse shall be as the noone day.* as it is. Esa. 58. 10. *They shall*

Esa. 58. 10.

bee glorious in the sight of men whilest they liue, for their vertuous actions, and bee had in an honourable remembrance amongst them after their death; yea and (which is the perfection of all their happinesse) they shall not onely be honourable in earth, but be made glorious in the fruition of God and euerlasting blessednes in the kingdom of heauen.

CHAP. 21.

Certaine obiections and excuses answered and taken away, whereby men are hindred from doing the workes of mercy.

AND thus haue I propounded many and weighty reasons, whereby we may be induced to exercise our selues in the works of mercy, and to be bountifull in relieuing the poore members of Iesus Christ. Now it only remaineth that we answer some obiections, which we haue not met with in the former discourse, and which, like blockes in the way, hinder men from entring into, or going forward in this christian course. And of these some respect the giuer, and some the poore who are the receiuers. Concerning the former; some will giue no almes, pretending that they are poore themselves, and haue nothing for them when they craue reliefe. And surely many of them speake more truly than they are aware, for though they abound with earthly riches, yet are they bare and beggarly in respect of the chiefe riches and spirituall treasures; though they are rich in goods, yet they are poore in grace, poore in loue towards God and their neighbours, poore in faith and in obedience and poore in pittie, mercy and compassion towards their brethren, which maketh them so niggardly and close-handed, that they will part

Se&.ⁿ
Their obiection
answered, who
excuse their
not giuing
almes by their
pouertie.

with nothing for their reliefe. But herein commonly they thinke themselues rich enough, and contrariwise they pretend that they are poore in worldly wealth, wherein they haue not only sufficiency, but also superfluitie & abundance. For these who haue nothing for the poore w^{ch} craue reliefe, haue plenty & too much to bestow vpon idle, vnprofitable and wicked vses. They haue not for the poore a few scraps to preserue them from perishing with hunger, but they haue enough for themselues to pamper their bellies, and with the rich glutton to fare delicately euery day. They haue inough to entertaine their rich freinds with superfluous pompe and plenty; and they who will not leaue them to their owne appetite, but presse them with their importunitie to eate still more, when already they haue eaten inough and too much, will not allow some small pittance to the poore to keep them from famishing. They who make no spare of their most costly wines, but swallow them downe themselues with great excesse; and prouoke, yea euen compell others to drinke of them vnto drunkennes, will not giue a little small drinke to the poore members of Iesus Christ to quench their thirst. They haue not for the poore some out-worne and cast apparell to couer their nakednes, and keepe their bodies from the iniuries of the winde and weather; but they haue inough not only for their owne vse, but also for pride and ostentation; their chests full thrust of rich clothing, and their wardrops thoroughly furnished with gorgeous garments, which

which serue for little other vse, than to keep those from sloth and idlenesse, that keepe them from moulding and moth-eating; and whereas they haue no course clothes to couer naked Christ, they haue costly ornaments for their walls of Arras and Tapestry. Finally, they haue not a few pence to spare for the relieuing of those who are in extreame necessitie; but they haue many shillings and pounds to spend wastfully and riotously, vpon dicing & gaming, vaine sights, obscene stage playes, and vpon all other sinfull pleasures and worldly delights which their carnall appetite any way desireth. But what a fearefull account haue these men to make in the day of iudgment, when as they shall make their reckoning vnto God, *Item* so much spent in excesse and superfluitie, and so little in performing the workes of mercy; so much laid out vpon worldly vanities and sinfull pleasures, and so little for good vses, and especially for relieuing Christ in his poore members.

But say thou hast but a mediocritie of estate, and doest not attaine vnto such plenty or superfluitie; but hast only a competencie and sufficiencie for thy selfe, yet out of this thou must spare somewhat to relieue those who are in extreame necessitie; and if thou hast so little money in thy purse, that it will only serue thine owne turne, thou art inioyned to sell somewhat which thou mayest best spare, as either corne, land, or vseles houshold stufte, that thou mayest raise a stocke, out of which thou mayest relieue the poore. For
if

Sect. 2.
That we ought
to giue some-
thing to the
poore, euen
out of our
meane estates.
Luk. 12. 33.

if carnall wicked men will make sale of such things, rather than they will want that which is sufficient for the satisfying of their sinfull lusts, how much more should we doe it for the better performance of these christian duties? If they care not to waste their estates in the seruice of the Deuill, let vs not spare such disbursements as will further vs in the seruice of God, seeing he is such a liberall master as will reward our kindnesse and neuer suffer vs to loose by our bountie? Finally, though it were granted that thou had'st nothing to sell, yet God commandeth thee rather then that thou should'st neglect these works of mercy, to labour with thy hands, that thou mayest haue to giue vnro him that needeth; and therefore excuse not thy neglect of this duty, by saying that thou hast nothing for them, vnlesse thou hast nothing to waste vpon thy superfluous vanities, nothing which thou canst spare from thy necessarie vse; and sell for these charitable employments; yea vnles thou art not only poore in estate, but impotent and vnable by thy honest labours to earne thy living, and hast both an empty purse and also shaking hands and weake knees, and in a word art thy selfe such a one as needeth by others to be helped and relieved.

Seft. 3.
Their obiection
answered, who
put off this du-
ty to those who
are richer.

Yea but there are many richer, and therefore this dutie of giuing almes lyeth rather vpon them than vpon thee, who art but poore and of small meanes in comparison of them, and if they neglect to giue, much more mayest thou (as thou supposst) and yet be excused before God. I answer

swer first, that none are excepted, but euery one is to giue according to his abilitie; wherein if thou failest, their neglect will not excuse thee, for their example is no president, but euery one must beare their owne sinne. Secondly, if hauing little, thou art content in obedience to God, to part with somewhat, thou performest a duty the more acceptable to God, and in the day of Christs appearing, thou shalt be so much the more richly rewarded; and for the present, thy worke shall be so much the more commendable: as we see in the example of the poore widdow and the Macedonians, who are so much commended for parting with somewhat out of their small store. Thirdly, if thou wilt not liue by precepts but by examples, why doest thou propound them for thy patterne, who are carnall and couetous, and not rather the example of our Saviour Christ, and the holy men of God, whose bounty euen out of their pouertie, is for this very purpose recorded in the Scriptures? Lastly, thou must consider, if thou art poore, that almesdeedes are a notable meanes to make thee richer, as being a spirituall kinde of husbandrie and merchandize, wherein if we labor and trade, wee shall thereby haue our wealth increased. Now no man in his right wits hauing small store of corne will omit to sow it, because others neglect the seasonable seede-time who haue greater plenty; no wise merchant will refuse to trade and lay out his money vpon a good bargaine, because those who haue greater stockes will not imploy them, but so much the rather they will sow and

trade, that their store & stocke may be increased; and why then should we be lesse wise in spirituall things, seeing we may be assured, that we shall receive a greater and better encrease?

Seet. 4.
An obiection
answered,
grounded vpon
the poores vn-
thankfulnesse.

Thirdly, it is objected that the poore are now adaiies so vnthankfull, that all is lost which is bestowed vpon them; for though wee giue them neuer so largely, they will not afford vs so much as a good report; if we neede their helpe they are to seek, and they will not take any paines for vs, to watch with vs when we are sick, or to work for vs, when we neede their labour. I answer, that if in giuing thy almes thou aimest at these ends, thou art rightly serued; for they did not spring out of the fountain of charity, but selfe-loue and worldly respects, and were done for thine owne praise or profit, and not because God requirerh these duties at thy hands; the which is not to doe workes of mercy, but to put out thy money to vsurie for thine owne aduantage. Secondly, I may say of almes, as the heathen man of benefits, that if we bee so curious in auoiding the giuing of our almes to those who are vngratefull, wee shall giue none at all, and so these good deedes will perish in our owne hands for want of doing them, for feare lest they should perish in the hands of others. According to that Eccles. 11. 4. He that obserueth the wind shall not sow, and hee that regardeth the cloudes shall not reape. And elsewhere; What great thing were it to doe good vnto manie, if none should deceiue vs? but it is true vertue to giue when wee hope not for any recompence, no not so much as thanks. So that though

Itaque apud al-
um pericant apud
te peribunt. Senec.
de benef. 31.

Senec. de benef.
ob. 1. cap. 1.

all hope were cut off to finde a thankefull man, I had rather receiue nothing then not giue. because hee is more faultie who giueth not, then he who hauing receiued a good turne is vnthankefull. And againe: Is hee vngratefull? he hath therein not iniured me, but himselfe. I haue done my duty when I gaue. Nor will I for this giue more slowly, but with greater diligence: for what I haue cast away vpon this man, I shall find among others, Yea, I will giue vnto the same man againe, and (like a good husband-man) I will overcome the barrennesse of the soile, with my care and painefull tillage; neither is it any great matter to giue and lose, but to lose and giue. And yet Christian beneficence goeth further, requiring that wee should giue, not onely to those who are vngratefull and doe vs no good, but also to such as are enemies and doe vs hurt: according to that Rom. 12.20. *If thine enemy hunger feede him, if he thirst giue him drinke*, because by this meanes, wee shall overcome euill with good, our greatest enemy being no more able to beare malice when we loade him with benefits, then his head is able to beare fiery coales that are cast vpon it. But say we should not overcome them with our kindnesse, yet it shall bee a noble worke, and worth our labour, to overcome our selues; say, that he offendeth through his vngratefulnessse, let him beare his sinne, and let vs doe our dutie: for it is too much charitie towards another man, to commit a certaine sinne, in not giuing; because we ghesse that he will sinne in his receiuing; and to preuent the fault of another, by committing a greater in our owne person. Finally

Non est magni animi dare & perdere, sed perdere & dare.
Senec. de Benef. lib. 7. cap. 32.

Rom. 12.20.

Prou. 19. 17.
Matth 6 4.

ly, let vs remember, that what wee giue vnto the poore, we lend vnto the Lord, and therefore though they faile neuer so much, yet hauing such an all-sufficient surety we are sure of good payment, yea, the lesse we receiue from them, the better it will be for vs, if we be not discouraged with their vnthankfulnesse; for then God being our pay-master, hee will pay vs like himselfe, not onely with transitorie things for transitorie, but also with such blessings as are spirituall, heavenly, infinite and euertlasting.

Seck. 3.

Their obiection
answered, who
say that the
poore are wicked.

Fourthly, it is objected that the poore now adayes are so wicked and euill that they deserue no releefe, and what is giuen vnto them, is but cast away, seeing it doth but maintaine them in their vngodly courses. To which I answer, that this should not discourage vs from giuing, but make vs more diligent in seeking out those who are worthy to be releued. The husband-man doth not refuse altogether to sow his seede, because there are some grounds so barren, that they will beare nothing but weedes and thistles; but this maketh him carefull either to looke out more fruitfull soile, which will returne fruitfull increase, or with his good husbandry to make that which in it selfe is bad, to become better; neither doth he expect that all hee soweth should prosper and increase his haruest, seeing some falleth by the way-side, and is trodden vnder foot, some is deuoured by the fowles which prey vpon it, and some falleth among the stones, or is so choaked with weedes and thornes, that it thriueth not. And so
the

the wise merchant giueth not ouer trading, because some of the goods which he aduentrureth, is lost by shipwracke, pirates, banquerours and other casualties, but is so much the more diligent in his imployments, and sendeth out his goods into many places, that his gains at one time, may counteruaile and exceede his losses at another: And so the miscarrying of some part of our almes, should not discourage vs in sowing the seedes of our beneficence, nor make vs giue ouer our spirituall merchandize, but cause vs rather to exercise our selues in these Christian duties with more diligence, that the well-bestowing of almes at one time, may make amends for that which at another time is cast away and perissheth; according to that Eccles. 11. 6. *In the euening sow thy seed, and in the morning withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall bee alike good.* And our Sauiour would not haue vs to bee too scrupulous, but would haue vs to giue *unto euerie one that asketh of vs*, namely, when as wee see that they are in great necessitie. For to bee ouer-zealous and suspicious without apparant reason, is to proclaime that wee are vtterly destitute of Christian charity; for the Apostle telleth vs, that *loue thinketh no euill, it beleeueth all things, it hopeth all things.* 1. Cor. 13. 5. 7. Yea, but experience teacheth that the most that craue are vnworthy to receiue our almes, for they are so wicked in themselves, so irreligious and destitute of the true feare of God, and towards vs so deceitfull, colouring their

estates with lies, and vsing so many fraudulent deuises to blinde oure eyes, and to stirre vs vp to pittie, when as there is no true cause, that those that giue are commonly couzened by them, and doe no good in the exercise of their bountie. To which I answer, that this should not weaken our hands, in doing these workes of mercie, but encrease our care and diligence, in making better choyce. It is but too true which is objected, but yet if by this wee bee vtterly discouraged from giuing almes, wee shall sinne no lesse in not giuing, then they shall doe in their vnworthy receiuing. For as they commit a kind of sacriledge in diuerting our bountie from those who are truly poore, vnto themselues, so wee if wee keepe in our handes the goods of the poore vnbested vnder the colour of these pretences, our keeping of them is no lesse sacrilegious then their receiuing them. Againe, though it cannot bee denied, but that the poore greuously sinne, in drawing almes from vs by manie notorious lyes and subtile deuises; yet it is a question whether we be not as faultie, in putting them to these shifts, through our vncharitableness and hardnesse of heart, which manacleth so our hands, that wee will not stretch them out to doe these workes of mercie, vnlesse our pittie and compassion bee excited and awakened out of their deepe lathargie, by these extraordinarie inuentions. So Chrysostome saith, that *the poore mans dissimbling proclaymeth the inhumanitie of the rich. For when by begging, and crouching, and speaking words*

*In quo simulatio
illius tunc est in
humanitatis pro-
ca. Chrysost. in
1. Cor. 9. Rom. 21
Tom. 4. c. 487.*

to moue pittie, and looking heauily, and weeping bitterly he cannot in the whole day get necessarie foode; he is put to deuise artificiall shifts, which doe not so much disgrace him, as those who arriue him to these extremities. And therefore he is worthy pittie, whose necessitie inuenteth these arts; and wee innumerable punishments, who bring the poore by our obduratenesse into this necessitie. For if ordinarie meanes would moue vs, he would not wrong vs, or himselfe by vsing those which are extraordinarie.

Let not therefore the poores vnworthinesse hinder our bounty, but taking reasonable care to bestow our almes as well as we can, let vs continually exercise our selues in these works of mercy. And to this purpose let vs consider, that if we bee ouer-curious in choosing, we shall neglect our dutie and not giue at all; according to that, *Ecclesi. 11. 4. He that obserueth the winde shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reape. Bee not (saith one) ouer carefull and curious, in examining those to whom thou shouldest giue; as whether he be a beleener or an infidell, iust or vniust; for if thou hangest thus in suspence, thou wilt let the seasonable seed-time passe, and so finde nothing to reape in the time of haruest.* Secondly, let vs let before vs the example of our heauenly father, who makerh his sunne to rise on the euill and on the good, and sendeth raine on the iust and on the vniust, that so wee may approue our selues to be his children. And let vs not (as the Apostle exhorteth) be overcome of euill, but overcome euill with goodnes: for it is a notable meanes to make them like and imbrace

Sect. 6.
Reasons why
we should not
be ouer scrupulous.

Ecclesi. 11. 4.

*Omnipredius in
Ecclesi. 11.*

Math. 3. 45.

Rom. 12. 22.

Beneficia in vul-
gus est largiri
iustitia. Per
danda sunt mi-
sera ut semel po-
tius bene. Senec.
de beneficiis. l. 1. c. 1.

Gregor. Noli
arguere.

Miseria illi non
de meritis iudi-
care consuevit;
sed necessitas illi
subvenire, iuuare
pauperem non ex-
aminare iustitiam.
Ambrosius in epist.

Chrysostomus de La-
zaro, Conc. 2.
2o m. 2. col. 1350
2o m. ad thes. vi
pauper dignus
habetur elemo-
sina, cum est
ex parte. 2o m.
De mortuis ca-
ritas sed humani-
tas. 2o m.

brace our profession, and follow our holy con-
uersation, when as tasting of our bountie, they
loue our persons for the good they receiue of vs.
Thirdly, let vs remember, that it is much better
to giue vnto many that are vnworthy our almes,
than that one who is worthy should be neglected
in his necessitie; for it is their fault if they be vn-
worthy, but ours if being worthy we do not re-
lieue them. To which purpose one saith; *Be not*
ouer diligent in examining, who is worthy the almes
thou giuest and who is vnworthy, seing it is better to
giue to the vnworthy for the loue of the worthy, than
to hazard it, that he who is worthy should be defrauded
of his due, for the suspicion of his vnworthines. 4^{ty}
let vs consider that mercy looketh not after merit
but after miserie and extreame necessitie; and,
chiefly intenderth to relieue their pouertie, and
not to examine their righteousness. *It is one thing*
(saith Chrysostome) to be a Iudge, and another to be
a giuer of almes: and therefore they are called almes,
because we also giue them to those that are vnworthy.
And againe; *Only the want and penurie of the poore*
man maketh him fit to receiue an almes &c. Neither
doe we giue to the manners but to the man, nor doe we
take compassion on him for his vertue, but for his mi-
serie. Fifthly, let vs know that if God should
take the same course with vs as we doe with the
poore, and examine our merits and deserts be-
fore he would bestow his gifts vpon vs, we should
neuer haue our requests granted, but hopelessly
perish in our wants and miseries. Sixtly, let vs
forbeare these ouer strict examinations of the
poore

poore that craue our helpe, seing we shall not so much comfort and refresh them by our gifts, as vex and torment them by our harsh maner of giuing. To which purpose Chrysostome demandeth: *Why doest thou* (saith he) *afflict the distressed and wretched soule? he flyeth vnto thee as vnto a safe harbour, and why then doest thou raise against him these waves and billowes, and tossest him with a greater tempest than that of his penertie? why doest thou condemne him to the suffring of further miserie? would he thinkest thou haue come vnto thee, if he had expected such hard measure? or if he looked for such entertainment, and yet would come, his case is to be pitied so much the more, because he was thrust into thy presence by meere necessitie.* Finally, consider that though the poore be vnworthy to whom thou giuest, yet God is worthy for whose sake thou giuest; and if thou giuest in obedience to his commandement, though it be cast away in respect of the party who receiueth thy almes, yet not vnto thee who bestowest them; and though in respect of their vnthankfulnesse and wickednesse thou mayest iustly complaine with the Prophet, in another case, that all that thou hast done for them is in vaine; yet thou mayest also surely conclude with him, that *thy iudgment is with the Lord, and thy workes with thy God*, who will in no case suffer it to go vnrewarded.

The last obiection which worldlings make against the exercise of the workes of mercy is, that they haue a great charge and many children, and therefore they must not giue away their goods to

G g

strangers

Chrys. in Math.
10. Hemil. 36.
Tom. 2. Col. 328

Esa. 49. 4.

Sect. 7.
Their obiection
answered, who
refuse to giue,
because they
haue many
children.

1 Tim: 5. 8.
*Basil. de diuitijs
 & paupertate.*
 141. 14.

strangers, for the Apostle teacheth vs, that Parents must lay vp for their children, and that he who neglecteth this dutie, *hath denyed the faith, and is worse than an Infidell.* Unto whom I might answer with Basil, *Ne transferant culpam in insones*, let them not lay the blame vpon those who are innocent; for they who are miserable hauing wife and children, would not be liberall if they were without them. Againe, was not the Gospell written as well to the married as vnmarried, to Parents, as well as those who haue no children? and are not therefore both alike to yeeld obedience, and equally bound to performe these works of mercy? Did they desire of God children to this end, that they might pleade by them a priuiledge to neglect his commandements? or may they not iustly feare if they thus abuse the blessing of posteritie, that God will lessen their number, lighten them of this charge, and so take away their excuse, by depriving them of their chiefest comfort? the which should be iust with God thus to punish them, seeing they make idolls of them, louing them better than they do God that gaue them. But thy children are deare vnto thee and must be provided for. And good reason; yet let thy God be dearer, and let them not make thee to neglect him, who gauethee to thy selfe, and them vnto thee, and hath provided all that thou inioyest, both for thee and them. Provide for them comperencie and sufficiencie, but deny not vnto God of thy abundance and superfluitie. Christ (saith Austin) asketh, yet doth not receive,
 and

*De Disciplia
 Christ. cap. 1.
 Tom. 9. fol. 914.*

and thou scandalizest thy profession of piety with words of crueltie, saying, what shall I reserve for my children? I oppose Christ vnto thee, and thou re-objectest thy children vnto me. But this no doubt is great iustice, that thy sonne should be left enough to maintaine his riotous expences, and that thy God should want necessities? For hast thou not read, hast thou not obserued, *when yee haue not done it to one of these little ones, yee haue not done it vnto me?* hast thou not read? hast thou not feared? Behold who it is that wanteth and asketh, and doest thou begin to number thy children? Number them and spare not, but among them reckon thy Lord as one of the number. If thou hast one, let him be the second; if two, the third; if three, the fourth &c. For thou knowest what thy God is who hath giuen thee whatsoever thou hast, and will richly recompence what thou returnest vnto him: but thou knowest not what thy children will proue, perhaps ingratefull, and will not remember thee for thy bounty; it may be wasters and prodigalls, who will wickedly and riotously spend, what thou hast as wickedly gotten and reserved. Yea it may be that the wealth which thou leauest them will be the cause, at least the occasion of their euerlasting ruine, whereas thereby they are furthered in the fruition of their sinfull pleasures, and inabled with more freedome to runne on and perish in their vngracious and wicked courses.

Yea but thy loue and care ouer thy children is so great, that nothing can make thee to neglect

Sect 8.
We shew our
loue towards
it.

our children
when we are
bountifull to-
wards the
poore.

it. Be it so. Yet loue them wisely, and take care to provide so for them, as that their estate may be sure and durable. Now whether is this better effected by thine own prouision, or by the leauing them to the good blessing of God in a moderate estate, and to the wise and gracious guidance of his speciall prouidence? This question is easily determined, for though thou providest most abundantly for them, their state is subiect to such innumerable casualties, that out of the highest flow of plentie, they may easily be brought to as great an ebbe of want and penurie. They may be oppressed by those who are more mighty, or defrauded by those that are more craftie; the Princes iust displeasure, or their owne faultinesse, may turne them out of all, or in this cunning age, wherein there are none more skilfull to builde strongly, then others are to vndermine and supplant, there may some cracks or flaw be found in their title, and so for want of words or letters to carrie it, thy children may be deprived of the benefit of thy care and prouidence. But if God take the care & charge ouer them, he is such a faithfull Tutor and powerfull Guardian and Protectour, that none shall be able to wrest their portion and patrimonie out of his hands. Now what is the meanes whereby thou maiest make thy children Gods wards and pupills, how maiest thou procure for them his blessings, and assure them of the gracious protection of his all-ruling prouidence? surely not by greedy couetousnesse and immoderate care in hounding vp for them excessive wealth,

wealth, nor by neglecting the workes of mercie and the releuing of the poore, that thou maiest leaue to thy children abundant riches. For how is it likely that hee will blesse vnto them thine estate which is gotten and raked together by vniust keeping that, which he hath inioyned thee to bestow, and by the vtrer neglect and contempt of his commandement? or that God will regard and feede thy children who hast neglected his and suffred them to pine and perish for want of reliefe? But the onely meanes to obtaine Gods blessing vpon thy selfe and thy posteritie, is to obey his commandements, to trust him vpon his word, and to giue liberally vnto the poore. For the righteous man who is mercifull and lendeth, not onely himselfe, *but his seede also is blessed.* Psal. 37. 26. Hee doth not say that his children shall liue in a rich and pompous estate, for so they may doe, and yet with the rich glutton be euerlastingly condemned; yea this worldly wealth may be the meanes of furthering and increasing their fearefull condemnation; but that they shall haue Gods blessing vpon that which they inioy, which whether it bee lesse or more, will make it sufficient, and so sanctifie it to their vse, that it shall bee vnto them a pledge of Gods loue, and a pawne and earnest pennie of their eternall saluation. In which regard we may truly say, that there is no losse to our posteritie through our performance of these workes of mercy, but rather great gaine and advantage, and that (as *Augustine* saith) *we performe for the good*

Psal. 37. 26.

For si an hared;
gratiā quā-

quid misericor-
dia causa de eius
portione detraxer-
it. August. de
tempore dom. 76

and advancement of our children, whatsoeuer we wisely detract from their portion, for the doing of these workes of mercie. And therefore let not our children hinder vs from relieuing the poore, but rather let vs in Christian discretion do it more freely, that so wee may bring Gods blessing vpon our posteritie, and moue him with his gracious prouidence to protect and watch ouer them; and the greater care wee haue of their benefit and welfare, so much the rather let vs commend them vnto God, who will take care of them when our care shall cease and do them no good.

Sect. 9.
No reason
why we should
neglect the
poore to leaue
our children
rich.

Finally though we are assured, that the goods which we spare from the releife of the poore and leaue to our children, should prosper with them, and make them great on the earth, yet were there no reason why for this wee should neglect these workes of mercie? for why shouldest thou loue thy children better then thine owne person, and in prouiding for them neglect thy selfe? yea why shouldest thou preferre their wealth before thine own soule, & their flourishing estate in the world, which is but momentany & mutable, before the fruition of those ioyes which are infinite and euerlasting? what will it profit thee when thou appearest before thy iudge to alleadge, that thou hast plaide the good husband, and prouided liberally for thine owne children, when hee shall lay it to thy charge, that to doe thus, thou hast neglected and starued his? what comfort will it be vnto thee, if for getting some trifles for thy posteritie on earth, thou hast lost heauen, or to remem-

remember that thy children ruffle it out in worldly wealth and superfluous abundance, when thou shalt be stripped of all, and want a droppe of cold water to coole thy scorching heate? And therefore provide for thy children with a good conscience, and so as that thou neglect not the poore members of Christ: that God may blesse thy provision vnto them in this life; and provide for thee and for them, if they walk in thy waies, eternall mansions and an inheritance immortall, vndefiled, and that passeth not away, in the kingdom of heauen. The which he vouchsafe vs who hath bought it for vs, Iesus Christ the righteous; To whom with the Father, and the Holy Spirit, be all praise and glory, power & dominion, both now and for euermore.

AMEN.

FINIS.

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